



# ENGLAND

## POLITICAL AND SOCIAL.

BY

AUGUSTE LAUGEL.

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE DUC D'AUMALE.

*Author of "Studies in Science," "The United States during  
the War of 1861-65," &c., &c.*

TRANSLATED BY

PROF. JAMES MORGAN HART.



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## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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THE author, M. Laugel, has sent his book into the world unheralded. I should gladly do the same with the translation, but for the feeling that it may be wise to preface a few words in self-defence.

Translation, as a literary labor, is always more or less ungrateful. The errors that one commits are sure to be detected, while passages correctly rendered are passed over unheeded by the reader and the critic. This is the way of the world, and I am not disposed to quarrel with it. I content myself with calling the attention of reader and critic to one circumstance, generally overlooked. Books may be roughly divided into two classes: statements of fact, and statements of fiction, belief, sentiment, or impressions. The latter class will include all works in which style is an essential and pervading element, in which the author makes us feel throughout his individuality. It is precisely these works that give the translator most trouble. As long as statements of abstract or scientific truth merely are in question, any rendering will do that reproduces the meaning clearly and completely. But where the original is a work to which Buffon's aphorism must be applied: the style is the man, the translator finds himself in a perpetual dilemma. He is called upon to choose between forcing his own language into unwonted channels of expression and sacrificing somewhat of the spirit and grace of the original.

It is easy to recognize the class to which the present work belongs; few writers on political subjects have so strongly marked, so individualized a style as M. Laugel. What he tells us is not new; the facts of English political history, the phases of religious belief, the social movements past and present will be familiar to the reader of average information. The novelty of the work consists in

the way in which the author approaches us, the way in which he combines and applies his statements, the pervading spirit of intelligent, unprejudiced, yet impassioned inquiry ; above all, the lion-like boldness of his utterance. There are passages without number, where every phrase is an epigram, sharp as an arrow and strong as a thunderbolt. I take the liberty of citing one in the original :—

“L' histoire des colonies a été rarement écrite, et n' a jamais été lue. Nos sociétés hautaines, pharisaïques, fières de leur prétendue moralité, nourries de belles maximes et de mots trompeurs, ferment volontairement les yeux sur ces luttes obscures où l'homme civilisé redevient voleur, pirate, animal de proie. Les combats entre les peuples chrétiens sont réglés par certaines conventions et enterpris au nom d'intérêts élevés ; la force prend la peine de se couvrir du masque du droit. Elle veut faire croire qu' elle est la protection du faible, de l'opprimé, qu' elle répare les erreurs séculaires, qu' elle est l'arme souveraine de la justice. Même quand elle opprime, elle cherche à convaincre ; elle voudrait faire violence aux âmes en même temps qu' aux corps.

“En face des race que nous nommons inferieures, ces scrupules s' évanouissent ; il semble que la force n' ait plus besoin alors de justification. Bien des vaincus la subissent, comme un fléau divin, comme quelque chose d' incompréhensible et de nécessaire. Certaines races commencent à se flétrir sitôt qu' elles ne savent plus vaincre ; elles abdiquent, se livrent, trop heureuses de désarmer la colère d' un maître et d' obtenir ses faveurs.” (Page 285 of the translation).

England has produced one essayist brilliant by eminence : Macaulay, and two of Macaulay's most brilliant essays, those on Clive and Warren Hastings, treat of England's colonial policy in the East ; but we shall look in vain in Macaulay for a passage equaling the above in pithiness, pungency, merciless probing after the truth. We must go back to Tacitus.

In face of such a style, my duty as translator seemed plainly marked out. I considered myself under obligation

to reproduce the original with more than common literalness, to tax the resources of the English language, and even to transgress here and there the normal limits of English style, in the hope of making the reader feel the full power of the author. I did not consider it my duty to quench M. Laugel's fire in the "lymph" of the *London Times* or the *Athenæum*.

The reader will find passages, then, that may strike him as odd. In most instances, the fault will have to rest with the translator. In some instances, however, the author himself must come in for a share of the blame. M. Laugel never writes obscurely, but he sometimes overtaxes the resources of his own language, in his anxiety to write forcibly. We see that he has had to struggle for the power of expression. In all such cases, I have tried to give the original just as it stands, for better or for worse. It is sloth in a translator not to make at least the earnest and persistent effort to reproduce the author; but to attempt to improve upon the author is impertinence.

Some of the quotations made by the author from English works I have succeeded in giving in the original form; the others, where the work was either not cited or not accessible, I have been obliged to retranslate from the French. The reader will detect the difference by the presence or absence of quotation marks.

It does not come within my province, as translator, to offer any criticisms upon the merits of the author. M. Laugel can speak better for himself. He has passed many years in England, as private secretary of the Duc d'Aumale, and is thoroughly familiar with the language, literature, society, and institutions of that country. He is personally well known to many Englishmen and Americans. Every page of his essay bears witness to his ability to penetrate to the very essence of English life, to catch and portray the fundamental features of English character, to sympathize with the hidden springs of national action. The entire work is conceived in a spirit of *justesse*, free alike from blind adulation and flippant prejudice; M. Laugel holds the happy mean between Voltaire and Heinrich Heine.

But there is one criticism that forced itself upon my



attention while at work upon the earlier chapters. M. Laugel is fond of reverting to the Anglo-Saxons as barbarians. All that is coarse, chaotic, insurgent in the English character is explained on the theory of Anglo-Saxon atavism. No student of history will deny, of course, that the Anglo-Saxons were at one time barbarians. But when conquered by the Normans, they had been settled in England for six centuries. What remains we have of their literature and laws lead us to judge that in the eleventh century they had reached a high degree of civilization, in fact, a higher degree than that reached by any other European nation. Were we able to see both Anglo-Saxons and Normans as they actually confronted one another in 1066, we should probably give the preference to the former. What ensured the conquest of William was the circumstance that England, having long been a reasonably centralized country, far more so than France of those days, could be held by any one who seized upon the central power. If we run through the history of the last fourteen centuries, we shall find that in every department, excepting pure art, England has led the van by a generation, or a century, or several centuries. Certain it is that a people capable of producing a poem like *Beowulf*, poets like Caedmon and Cyneulf, church-reformers like Aelfric, law-givers like Aelfred, should not be called barbarians. Measured by our standards, they were doubtless coarse and imperfect in many respects, but they were not barbarian; they had made very decided and rapid progress in civilization. The more we learn of the character and institutions of our Anglo-Saxon progenitors, the greater becomes our respect for their sturdy good sense, their kindliness, their domestic virtues. The chasm that separates the Texan colonist from the Comanche brave is not much wider than the chasm between the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons of the fifth and the Anglo-Saxons of the eleventh century. What M. Laugel characterizes as Anglo-Saxon barbarism is simply the outburst of those elemental forces that underlie all civilization. Turn where we will, to France, Germany, Italy, to the Roman or the Greek empires, to the Egyptian, we shall always find the mob, let loose, acting after the same demoniacal fashion.

Barbarism is something different ; barbarians are neither communists nor insurgents, but aggressors following leaders and obeying laws of their own ; there are no stricter observers of law than men whom we call barbarians. Their law may not be our law, their ways may not be our ways ; but barbarism is still a mode of living, and communism, as a phase of insurrection, is the overthrow of every mode of living.

These remarks must not be understood as in any way derogatory from M. Laugel's standing as a historian. The closest familiarity with his work has not bred contempt, but rather a genuine and hearty admiration for his remarkable powers of investigation and expression. To use a homely phrase, M. Laugel always hits the nail on the head.

J. M. H.

*New York, March 1874.*



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# ENGLAND

## POLITICAL AND SOCIAL.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### *On the Characteristics of the English Race.*

GREAT nations are bred by the crossing of races ; they resemble those beautiful bronzes into the composition of which enter many metals. England was never anything to Rome but a despised and precarious conquest. It was not latinized like Gaul. The Scandinavian pirates, coming in small bands, established themselves more firmly. Nevertheless the Saxons, Jutes, Angles had no small trouble in making their way. For four centuries the two races, the Celtic and the Teutonic, the aborigines and the conquerors, jostled each other, drove each other back, waged desperate war upon each other. History has left these ferocious struggles to the gloom of night. After invasion came invasion ; after the Saxons, the Normans (Norsemen) or Danes. Here fusion was easy ; for there was community of origin, analogy of speech, the same

barbarism. Amid these perpetual conflicts grew up the race that was to become one day the English. The blood of the Celts passed into that of the Teutons, the poetic figure of Arthur stands for the dim Celtic past. His name and fame finally emigrate to the Brittany of France, for the conquerors had succeeded in suppressing them at home, and the remembrance of him returns to England only with the Normans of the Conquest. Teutonic and Scandinavian ferocity had worn out Celtic suavity and lightness, and had effaced the last vestiges of Rome. Latin was banished to the cloisters; the language that was then forming rejected Latin roots. The names of cities and towns are to this day almost all Saxon. Though centuries have elapsed, England always exults in secret at a victory of the Germanic spirit over the Celtic or over the Latin.

The substance of its character has remained Germanic. From the Teutonic womb proceed its slowness, its patience, its coolness, its headstrong courage. This origin will explain the submissiveness of so many unemotional, dull, commonplace lives, lives that never soar above the dust and are void of hope, will explain this self-tormenting rage not for what is perfect but for what is better, this spirit of observation in social and political science, this religion that calls for reasons and is dissatisfied with the past while remaining a slave to its forms. As to the courage, this has a twofold origin, for, on that point, the Celts are the equals of the Teutons; but apparently it has preserved more of Germanic brutality than of



the wanton boldness of the Britons. And yet it still has about it a certain cheerful contempt of death and a certain intoxication in the presence of danger that are truly Briton. Hear what Comines says on the point :

‘ He could not leave them out of his sight for a whole season, helping them to drill, and camp, and learn the things necessary in our wars here. For there are none so stupid, so awkward as they, when they go to war for the first time. But in a very little while they are excellent soldiers, sensible and daring.” And Froissart: “ They are the most daring people in the world, the most *outrageous* (*i. e.*, far-going) and daring.’

The courage and ferocity of the race are conspicuous in the useless wars of the Roses. Benvenuto Cellini speaks of the ‘ wild English beasts.’ In the Middle Ages every man is a soldier. The great statute of Westminster (Edw. I.) obliges every Englishman to keep himself in military equipments. Archery practice is compulsory ; bows and arrows are put into the hands of children of seven ; every village has to keep a pair of targets. It is forbidden to practice at a shorter range than two hundred yards. Beneath a rainy sky, in an atmosphere always charged with moisture, violent exercise becomes a physical necessity. The sluggish, drooping muscles are roused by contest and danger. Surgeons admit that operations upon Englishmen are much less dangerous than upon Frenchmen ; the nervous system is under the domination of the vascular. These powerful bodies, white and soft in texture, are reservoirs of hidden

strength. The indomitable courage of the British, says Macaulay, is never firmer and more obstinate than towards the close of a bloody and doubtful day. They delight in fighting, violence and force. There is a sort of Scandinavian ferocity in the invectives of the Puritan ministers : Beat your ploughshares into swords to fight the good fight of the Lord. Cursed be he who turns aside his sword. Better to see a whole people wallowing in gore than to embrace idolatry and superstition. (Southey, *Book of the Church*.)

The quality most prized in a man is a well-nigh brutal virility. Young men seek after strength and look down upon grace. The Englishman of the schools and the universities is an athlete ; he rows, wrestles, *trains* himself in a thousand ways. He seeks out rain, cold, wind, the sea, every sort of fatigue and danger. The women are virile. They row, they join the men in the chase through ploughed fields and over great hedges, walls, and ditches. The most perfect beauty has something savage about her, something a trifle awkward and shy. She suggests Diana rather than Venus.

Robert Walpole's father said to him one day at Norfolk Manor, after the cloth had been removed : 'Come, Robert, you must drink twice to my once. It will never do to have a sober son witness his father's drunkenness.' For a long while the five-bottle men, those who could swallow five bottles of wine without losing their senses, were the objects of admiration. Fox, after losing two thousand guineas at the club, washes his face and hurries to Parlia-

ment to make a speech on the Thirty-Nine Articles.—  
(*Recollections of the Life of Fox.*)

The Saxon conquest did not crush out all the germs perpetuated in the race whose remains we find in Ireland, Wales and the Scotch Highlands, a race immeasurably strange, dreamy, quick to take impressions, abounding in *élan* and wanting in persistency, sentimental and religious. Outliving the centuries, the Celtic element still crops out above heavy Saxon Teutonism ; we seem to see a touch of it in English *humor*, the universal fondness for gaming and betting, this grain of folly amid so much wisdom. The ancient spirit obtrudes itself like a feeling of remorse or a mockery. It raises the Englishman by fits and starts above the even horizon of his life, makes him blush for what he is most fond of, gives to assurance the air of being ill at ease, to pride the mask of timidity. Religion, striving to extricate itself from superstition and childishness, always finds itself led back to them.

What has not been written about Shakespeare ! German professors are ready to claim him as a Teuton, and his dramas are put upon all the stages of Germany. They almost go so far as to say, over the Rhine, that Shakespeare is better understood at Munich, Dresden, Berlin, than at London. But can we not recognize Celtic genius in Shakespeare's unbridled imagination, his strangeness, his fancy, as well as in a certain acuteness, clearness, and nimbleness of his that are not in the least Teutonic ? Atavism is always at work reproducing ancient traits in human families. We encounter the Celtic thread in the

poetry of Shelly, the scion of an ancient English family. By nature rebellious, almost perverse, never bending to social laws or realities, Shelly lived as in a dream, ignoring and despising man, constructing a new human nature from the collective but exaggerated and disproportionate features of the real. Is there not like madness in the extravagant landscape of a Turner, who plays with the sea, the mountains, the plains, with the clouds and the light, as though he were a second creator? What strange and troubled lives, those of the poets Savage, Collins, Chatterton! This love of the unknown and the impossible, this secret derangement that marks the poet, are to be met with in private life. The wisest and the gravest have a secret taste for the extraordinary and the monstrous. They are not ready to eat the forbidden fruit, but they like to see and touch it, to inhale its odor. They have need of excitement, food for their imagination. These minds that are so poised, so cold in their outward show, so regulated, are almost always troubled in secret. Beneath Teutonic sluggishness bubbles and surges, as it were, the lava of impatience. Daily toil, a regard for propriety, the tyrannical rule of the world, cover up and often suppress this inner soul, so to speak. But often it betrays itself to us through all the measured calmness of speech and lying coldness of action. At times it breaks through and escapes like an *ignis fatuus*. Young men surfeited with pleasure, wealth, fictitious greatness, sink their name, cast themselves into the gulf of toiling and suffering humanity, turn into workmen, sailors. Noblemen seek out the rabble:

rich men, poverty. Virtue is drawn towards vice, yes, shamelessness. The privileged classes, the gods of the Olympus of aristocracy, take up with revolutionary rovers, adventurers, political bandits. Morbid curiosity urges the greatest,—shall we say, the purest?—to the prison, the fetid hospital, the scaffold, the foot of the gallows, wherever there are tears, sighs, blood, gnashing of teeth, to the slave-market, into the harem, to the Mormons, to the petty and obscure sects of all lands.

This insubordination of soul is often associated with regularity and even austerity of conduct. Ennui, superfluity of wealth, the torpor of a well-regulated society, a depressing climate, are insufficient to account for this dash of the insatiable, the eccentric (the word, I believe, is of English origin), the morbid, which we find beneath the surface. The history of the nation, taken as a whole, is a sort of lofty defiance to mankind, to nature, to all the forces of earth.

The Norman imprint is more evident but less profound. When the Normans conquered England, they were no longer the pirates of the North. They had already received the strong impress of Latin civilization. They brought with them into Great Britain patrician pride, the sense of politics, a taste for domination and ostentation, their own eager and positive spirit, the genius of oratory, quite different from the genius of poetry. They also gave to it its grand architecture. But in England, as in Sicily, Norman art, greatened for a moment by the pride of conquest, soon exhausted itself, like

an exotic plant that dies after yielding magnificent flowers.

The Normans were in the minority. But they were and continued to be the masters. Hence the Norman stamp shows itself more in politics than in manners, literature, national character. The instincts of the aristocracy were for a long time different from those of the people. Norman blood has mingled only slowly and drop by drop with the Celtic and the Saxon. The ruling race, greedy after gain, prosaic, suspicious, quarrelsome, fond of force, clever without being crafty, wanting in finesse but not in clear-sightedness, has guided, so to speak, the fortunes of the country. It has looked upon England as its prey, and the world at large as the prey of England. It has never known any sentimental politics; it has fought for interests, not for ideas. Inspired by a sturdy faith in its own excellence, it has never regarded its allies as other than its tools; it has despised its friends as much as its enemies. Its egoism, by turns daring or patient, never letting itself be turned aside, knowing neither weakness nor remorse, has supplied the place of virtue. The brutality of the pirate has become, in the course of centuries, the wisdom of the statesman.

We feel touched in spite of ourselves by this sturdy faith of a patrician race in its own greatness and its destiny. 'Who shall dare to say,' said Cobbett, sighing in America for his country, 'that an Englishman must not despise all the nations of the earth? For my part I do, and with all my heart.' What intense pride in the words

with which Canning announced to parliament that he had recognized the Spanish Colonies: 'If France occupied Spain, was it necessary, in order to avoid the consequences of that occupation, that we should blockade Cadiz? No, I looked another way. I sought materials of compensation in another hemisphere. Contemplating Spain such as our ancestors had known her, I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies. I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the old.' What Roman harshness in the chastisement inflicted upon Afghanistan by England after the disastrous retreat of the army in 1842. Istalif a city of fifteen thousand souls is taken by assault, pillaged, burned. Not a man is spared. Caboul is made a heap of ruins. All the forts in the mountains are razed. Thereupon the English army withdraw, even then scarcely feeling avenged.

England has always treated the politics, the sovereigns and princes of the Continent, very superciliously. An English fleet arrives one day in the bay of Naples. A captain disembarks, proceeds to the palace of the king, (afterwards Charles III. of Spain), lays a watch upon the table, and announces that if a treaty of neutrality is not signed within an hour, the bombardment will commence. The treaty was signed and the squadron sailed out of the port twenty-four hours after entering. Spain, Portugal, Greece, Naples, Denmark, have all had their turn in learning the weight of English friendship.

The bombardment of Copenhagen in the midst of profound peace taught the Danish Government, in 1807, how



England never hesitates to go to any length when she finds herself threatened. Hear how an English poet, Campbell, celebrates this exploit :

‘ Out spoke the victor then,  
As he hailed them over wave,  
Ye are brothers, ye are men !  
And we conquer but to save :—  
So peace instead of death let us bring ;  
But yield, proud foe, thy fleet,  
With the crews, at England’s feet.  
And make submission meet  
To our king.’—

*Battle of the Baltic.*

What singular *naïveté* in the arrogance. The Dane is to be proud of delivering up his vessels to England. After taking them, she offers to shake hands. That should suffice for his consolation.

The union of so many races has produced, in fine, a genius most complex. It is no longer Teutonic genius in its barbarian purity. It presents an indefinable blending of the vague and the trenchant ; a taste for business with a taste for revery, adroitness with bewilderment, a love of responsibility with perpetual scruples, submissiveness with independence, profundity with platitude, vanity with awkwardness. Life, for all its being such a spiritual, inner life, is encumbered with ostentation, ponderous luxury, ruinous formalism.

The aristocratic class owes its qualities as much to its origin as to its privileges. It has more suppleness, more fertility of mind, than the laboring classes, restricted as

they are to a narrow groove. We encounter more simplicity, more assurance, more bonhommie ; we miss that perpetual tension which keeps the bourgeois ill at ease. Celtic unconcern is found especially in the lowest classes. It is seen in the rude country feasts that have given to England its surname of "Merry England." A veritable Saxon in his hours of toil, slow, patient, strong, the workman re-assumes the Celtic nature in his noisy or his melancholy hours of leisure, in his loves, half-animal, half-poetical, in the visions that flit through his drunkenness. The blood of the last conquerors does not flow through his veins, he knows not ambition. His broad shoulders support the entire edifice of British wealth and glory. Having no long-cherished desires, he has no hates. Politics are for him a sort of drama, where he plays the spectator. He is brutal ; he is pugnacious without being bloodthirsty.

The English race has not received any fresh stock since the Norman Conquest. Natural selection, operating within fixed limits, has created a sort of variety of the human species, the peculiar traits of which have become more and more sharply defined. But atavism has a constant tendency to reproduce the primitive traits. Like every thing highly artificial, it degenerates rapidly. It must be kept up incessantly by education, law, religion, opinion. It is easy to discern the roots of barbarian sentiments and passions, brutal roughness, cupidity, *naïve* adoration of greatness, eclat, money, and power. The empirical spirit, caught in a thousand fetters and illogical, rejects abstractions, general ideas. It admires, it loves, a painstaking

mediocrity. In what other country would Lord Liverpool have kept himself in power during a terrible war and during twelve years of ever troubled peace? A statesman without views or ideas, he distanced Grenville, Wellesley and Canning, because he was inferior to them.

In the last century, English manners, covered with a thin French veil, are at bottom extremely coarse. The courts of George I. and George II. are Teutonic in their brutality. Charles II. decked his vices with elegance. George II. makes a cynical display of them. Read the letters of Lady Mary Montagu. The name of *rake* is worn as stylishly by the ladies as by the gentlemen of quality. The princess-dowager (1754) speaks\* of the universal depravity of young men of distinction, women selling themselves, duchesses in the dress of men taking part in the masquerades of women of the town. Men of quality laughed at the law. "You threaten *me* with the law," says Lovelace contemptuously to Clarissa. Members of parliament sold their votes; directors and inspectors of charitable institutions robbed the poor. In France, when one heard in the eighteenth century of any thing harsh, low, ferocious, the remark was, "How very English." (*Letters of Madame du Deffand.*)

Beneath the thick mould of Teutonic barbarism, not yet exhausted, deep springs are flowing, unknown, invisible. Everywhere reason is coupled with fiction, in politics, religion, laws, manners. Superstition and formalism commingle with practical sense. A vein of disquiet, insatiety,

\* Dod's Diary, p. 326.

runs through these lives apparently so satisfied, placid, and well regulated. The soul, constantly held in check, as if by a spring, has a sort of double life, the one betraying itself in volition, method, action, its logical life, the other an illogical, capricious life, made up of dreams, sterile contemplations, and chimeras.

The literature is the faithful expression of these tendencies. It delights either in a sort of naturalism that thrusts man outside of himself or in a lyricism that loses itself in the abysses of the hidden life. The literatures of Greece and Rome, of Germany and France, equal or excel the English literature on certain points. But it does not yield to any one of them in power of imagination and in moral clear-sightedness. The imagination of Shakespeare has created a world as real as the veritable one. What is there like the imagination of Coleridge, so wild, fierce, daring? What savage and almost superhuman grandeur in Byron! How he has depicted the troubles, the raptures, the loathings, the wraths of a soul at once eager and world-weary. His pride outstripped even that of the proudest aristocracy in the world. Long did it bleed under the arrows of this demigod, this modern Apollo.

Conscience, more nervous, we might say, than it is in other races, is always aroused. Behind the silence, the coldness of the body are hid terrible tempests. These scene-shifters are always engaged in displaying the secret mechanism of passion. However timid they may be in real life, they are bold and daring in the hidden life. Their poets are Narcissuses contemplating themselves not with

love but with fear and trembling, at times with horror, the horror of the Puritan and the wild beast. Their loves are not the easy and sensual delights of the South; they are perturbations of spirit, ardors as mystic as they are carnal, dashed by sadness without reason. They love moral tempests, as their sailors love stormy and dangerous seas. These restless souls do not wish to be appeased. They are ever striving after the unknown, the invisible. What bitter sadness, what languor without consolation, in the songs of Shelley! What an intimate sense of the infinite, of the eternal and pitiless force that lives in the world.

“O lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!  
I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed,  
A heavy weight of hours has charmed and bowed  
One too, like thee, tameless and swift and proud.”

*Ode to the West Wind.*

Death recurs to them incessantly in their reveries, even in their love-songs. It is one of their muses. Shakespeare greets it familiarly, is always ready to stir up bones and jest at life and beauty.

“Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.”—

*Cymbeline.*

The pleasantry of Lamb, that charming, subtle, delicate spirit, full of feminine tenderness, often becomes funereal. He invents titles like these, “On the character of an Undertaker,” “On the inconveniences resulting from being hanged.” A certain amount of crudity is not displeasing.

The *verve* of Hogarth borders upon ferocity. His designs make one tremble rather than laugh. Vice, as Defoe paints it, is methodical, staid, has an air, I might say, of being thoroughly domesticated, that is more frightful than the easy, reckless vice of the Latins. Compare the Manon Lescaut of France, poetic and touching, even in her vice, with the English Manon, Moll Flanders, whose life Defoe has recounted, the woman who, as we learn from the title-page "was born in Newgate, was twelve year a whore, five times a wife, (whereof once to her own brother), twelve year a thief, eight year a transported felon in Virginia, at last grew rich, lived honest and died a penitent."

Melancholy implants herself as a natural flower in these serious souls. Shakespeare exclaims :

"How weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world."  
*Hamlet.*

Thomas Warton writes, at the age of seventeen, a poem on "The Pleasures of Melancholy." Fletcher also sings of her, depicts her with folded arms, with fixed and down-cast gaze, and fettered tongue. Milton, in his *Penseroso* adores the nymph :

"All in a robe of darkest grain." \*

Listen, however, to these stanzas, that came to Shelley beneath the bright sky of Naples :

\* The author has fallen into the common error of considering Milton's phrase "darkest grain," as tantamount to *black*. In reality, the color meant is *purple*. For the proof, and the important corollaries the reader is referred to Marsh, "On the English Language," p. 66. TR.

“ Yet now despair itself is mild,  
Even as the wind and waters are ;  
I could lie down, like a tired child,  
And weep away the life of care  
Which I have borne and yet must bear,  
Till death, like sleep, might steal on me  
And I might feel in the warm air  
My cheek grow cold and hear the sea  
Breathe o’er my dying brain its last monotony.”

These sad, mistrustful, dissatisfied hearts have need of a friend, some mute confidant. Nature takes the place. Hence their love for nature is tenderer than that of any other people. They seek her out everywhere ; lose themselves in her contemplation. But nothing can supplant with them the familiar scenes of England :

“ And one, an English home—gray twilight poured  
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,  
A haunt of ancient peace.”

*Palace of Art.*

Such is indeed the impression made by the English landscape, with its delicate and subdued tints, its sombre verdure, its houses resting on the heavy green sward—a repose like that of lilies floating on the slumbering lake. Nowhere wildness. The verdure is thick without disorder, the lines of the furrows are parallel, the hedges well trimmed. Nature has been kept in subjection for centuries. But the ever changing light, the ever shifting breeze, give her a sort of soul and life.

Beneath this soft sky, favorable to prolonged contemplation, the eye learns to hunt out the humblest, most



familiar details. Crabbe describes even weeds and brambles ; he is the Theocritus of a wretched parish, of the *workhouse*. His landscapes, like the miniatures of Gray, remind us of the Dutch school. Who has succeeded better than Goldsmith in describing rural life, the humble happiness that dwells by the glebe ? Wordsworth loves nature as a savage loves it, as the forester loves his forest. He seeks a soul in all things visible. The love of nature animates even the artificial and pompous rhetoric of Thomson's *Seasons*, like a flower of the fields astray in a carefully laid-out parterre.

The race is at once too contemplative and too active to excel in the arts. When it wishes to translate its thoughts, it prefers the living, pliant tongue of poetry to expression by form or color. Its intense, vehement genius knows not the norms and limits which are the essence of art. In painting, it selects the glaring, harsh rainbow tints, as if to defy nature. It creates for itself an artificial sun, an exaggerated light. The women are fond of striking colors in dress. In their pale blond beauty, ideal, soft and dreamy, they seem always to select what is least becoming. English art knows not that supreme indifference, that contentment, which breathes and pulses through joyous, unconscious nature. We always see the will, the effort, behind. In every writer there lurks the moralist. The pedant Johnson admired only those poems in which he found some moral lesson. Their engineers build admirably, nothing checks their audacity. But they work less as artists than as money-

makers. One thing done, they hurry on to the next. Their aim is the useful, not the beautiful.

Thus this race, unique, has two souls, as it were, the one male, the other female. Discontented and rebellious by instinct, reason leads it to content itself with the commonplace and mediocre. Disposed to revery and contemplation, it astonishes the world by its activity. A passionate lover of independence, it is ever in quest of new duties, ever imposing on itself new obligations. It is at once humdrum and original. It has never learned to do without liberty or victims. It adores wealth, but it is as generous as it is greedy. It worships chance, and has a liking for rule and order.\*

## II.

English blood has not received any foreign elements since the Norman conquest. Natural selection, operating within narrow limits, has blended the barbarian races and produced a new race. During this slow genesis a new society was forming, perfectly unchecked in its natural and, so to speak, organic development.

Political empiricism operated in England under the easiest conditions. For Great Britain has always been Great Britain; the boundaries having been fixed by nature. The peoples of the rest of Europe have spent centuries in seeking, some are to this day still seeking their limits.

\* The original is epigrammatic and hopelessly untranslatable: *elle a le culte du hasard et le goût de la règle.*—TR.

War has shifted their frontiers a hundred times, separating, joining, separating anew, provinces, races, idioms. Wherever national unity has not been effected, the nation is perforce military. The English people has always been warlike, it has never been military. And not being military, it has become free.

It became so in advance of all other peoples. In this isolated land, barbarian freedom became the bond of union no longer of petty hordes but of a people ; served as the ægis not of provinces but of a state. The smallness of the territory has made the greatness of the nation. In order that the idea of a fatherland may control each individual, break down all resistance, and animate every heart, the fatherland must have some visible shape. What more suitable than that of an island? The ocean surrounds it, limits it, chisels it into form.

English liberty is not a conquest made by reason or philosophy. It is the ancient patrimony of the barbarian races. United into a nation, they found no more natural way of protecting their independence than to entrust it to freemen. This liberty knows nothing of the servile violence of revolt, or the quibbles of jurists, or philosophic theories. It is a living thing, connate, unconscious like instinct, akin to the forces of nature.

Our minds, accustomed to regard liberty either as a gift or a conquest, an *octroi* or a right, are strangers to this singular disinterestedness that has always subordinated equality to liberty, this barbarian ideal that instils into every man the sentiment of independence, and yet at the

same time makes him feel the need of choosing his own master. This ideal, which was the soul of chivalry, demanding self-abnegation and sacrifice, we have long since ceased to comprehend. We are still willing to shed our blood for our country, but we are no longer willing to give up to it one iota of what we deem our rights. The Latin races perceive liberty only through equality. The Anglo Saxon race has never seen equality but through the medium of liberty.

In a narrow island, always under menace, jealous of every power that might gain the preponderance in Europe, the instinct of self-preservation must prevail over all. The feudal forces were promptly compacted into the national fasces. In a people animated by patriotism, the individual thinks less about himself than about the nation. The fatherland is a sort of visible, living, stirring god, who, like the human body, needs different organs for different functions. The men have no other aspiration than to contribute their efforts towards the health and beauty of this immortal body. The work is all honorable. It occasions no surprise that the feet do not resemble the head. Some live on the surface, the epidermis, in the light of day. Others circulate invisible through the arteries of the great body, or are attached to the heavy, massive bony structure that gives strength and resistance. The members of such a society are ignorant of envy ; to them inequality seems even necessary. They think much less about their rights than their duties. They find grandeur in littleness, they forget themselves, they make themselves grains of dust of

their own accord. So long as they feel the vague counter-stroke of all the emotions of the body, the atoms are content.

External nature herself has contributed her share toward suppressing in the English breast the love of equality. In cold countries, where the climate is rough, she places more distance between man and man. The rich and the poor, the laborer and the idler, are not so widely sundered in the happy lands of idleness and gay unconcern. Here the sun gilds and warms the tattered garb, the senses are easily satisfied, the mind becomes refined and discovers everywhere perpetual delight.

Equality could not but be born in Greece and Italy. A man is a man in climes where the atmosphere, bright waters, the blue sky, are the chief riches. One does not feel the need of shutting himself up in closed abodes, places of refuge that exclude the wind, the cold, rain, and disease. Art steps boldly out, makes itself public, rears fair monuments that have no owner and belong only to the gods.

But in a northern isle, lashed by furious winds, wept over by incessant rains, wrapped in fogs, man is more remote from man. He hides himself, shuts himself in. What a distance between the peasant and the dweller in cities, between the poor and the rich, between those humble lives of suffering that are but one long struggle and one long pang and those other lives that are the triumph of art, wealth, human ingenuity! The contrast seems at last a necessity, the voice of fate, like the contrast between

ugliness and beauty. Nobody is astonished. Strange! Envy is least strong precisely where there is the most to be envied. On the other hand, manly struggle against the blind and overwhelming forces of nature renders man more kindly disposed toward his fellow, more indulgent toward the happiness of others. The world over, sailors are kind; they have but one enemy, the sea.

This inequality, that comes of nature, by inheritance, and by mutual consent, far from weakening patriotism, sustains and strengthens it. Envy does not course like a hidden poison through the veins of the nation. In France, there are persons for whom the history of their country ends, others for whom it begins, in '89. No one, most assuredly, dreams any longer of courting foreign alliances, after the matter-of-course fashion of parties, princes and even royalty itself, in the olden time. But there are always nations within the nation, and they do not willingly reunite except upon the field of battle. In England, national greatness, British ambition, touch the same chords in the patrician and the serf, the bourgeois and the workman, the soldier and the cockney. The Saxon mind does not mistrust or jest at its own feelings. I do not find in the English language a word that can render the sentiment which we call *chauvinisme*. English patriotism is *naïve*, like egoism. It knows neither doubt, nor discussion, nor hesitation nor remorse. It never abases those whom it has exalted. England worships its heroes. Toward those who have served it, who have added aught to its power or renown, its more than kingly grati-



tude knows no bounds. It does not fall into the jealous ostracism of democracies; less from calculation than from a natural disposition to greatness everything that it touches. Our gifts bear the price that we ourselves seem to put upon them. So England never disparages the price of her favors. Among men thus formed, glory and even simple esteem seem to be inestimable treasures. Travellers penetrate to the centre of Africa, to the glaciers of the North, suffer hunger and thirst, undergo a thousand dangers, and deem themselves amply rewarded by a compliment from the Geographical Society or a shake of their sovereign's hand. Of what are these Englishmen in the Indies thinking, they more powerful than kings, surrounded by Asiatic pomp and luxury? Of the day when they can live in some gloomy street in May Fair. If we could take in all the seas at a glance, we should observe little points moving from all sides towards the same centre. Those are the vessels making their way from every corner of the globe to the ports of Great Britain. The thoughts also are hieing from all quarters toward this one pole. The English ideal follows the Englishman into every country, and envelops him in a coat-of-mail, as it were, or a cloud. Asiatic effeminacy, Latin levity, the gayety of childish nations, have no hold upon these solid, grave, lofty characters. Commerce, war, wealth, arts, material labor, never make them lose sight of the mother country.

## III.

The English ideal is of a different kind from that of Rome or Greece. Rome believed chiefly in its power, Greece in its genius ; England, in its moral excellence. Its faith therein is full, sincere, unqualified, not to be shaken by any thing. It reiterates incessantly to itself what Cowper said to it :

‘ My native nook of earth ! Thy clime is rude,  
Replete with vapors, and disposes much  
All hearts to sadness, and none more than mine.  
Thy unadulterate manners are less soft  
And plausible than social life requires,  
And thou hast need of discipline and art  
To give thee what politer France receives  
From nature’s bounty,—that humane address  
And sweetness without which no pleasure is  
In converse, either starved by cold reserve,  
Or flushed with fierce dispute and senseless brawl.  
Yet being free, I love thee.’—

*The Task.*

Nelson knew perfectly the men to whom he said at Trafalgar, these simple words : “ England expects every man to do his duty.”

I take the following lines from Robertson, a minister in the Anglican church. They describe the common feeling : “ Goodness, duty, sacrifice, these are the qualities that England honors. She gapes and wonders now and then, like an awkward peasant, at some other things—railway kings, electro-biology, and other trumperies—but



nothing stirs her grand old heart down to its central deeps, universally and long, except the Right. She puts on her shawl very badly, and she is awkward enough in a concert-room, scarcely knowing a Swedish nightingale from a jack-daw; but—blessings large and long upon her!—she knows how to teach her sons to sink like men among sharks and billows, without parade, without display, as if duty were the most natural thing in the world, and she never mistakes long an actor for a hero, or a hero for an actor. Men like Arnold and Wordsworth she recognizes at last; men like Wellington, more visibly right, at once, and with unalterable fidelity.”

A certain cool heroism, an ever tense inward energy, force keeping itself within bounds, a virtue that disdains appearances and is somewhat shy, these are the characteristics in which England is always pleased to recognize herself. The bass note of duty resounds through all her words. She believes herself to be better, superior. She beholds all the nations of Europe engaged in a vain and wretched struggle for the things that she has long enjoyed. Her institutions and her political career have seduced the other nations. She holds them up in triumph to all the world, but she considers them as really good only for herself. She has struggled victoriously against the greatest nations of the world, against Spain at the height of her power, against France. Her empire is so vast that she feels disposed to give up provinces rather than to conquer new ones. Her powerful hand can no longer close upon all that it holds. She is apprehensive lest, like Rome, her

only preservation may lie in further aggrandizement. She contemplates with anxious pride that Britain, great after a very different fashion from Great Britain, that is extending its borders in every direction, in every zone, in both hemispheres.

It is surprising that such triumphs, such continued good fortune, should not have softened somewhat the barbarian harshness of English patriotism. There is always a dash of acrimony, severity, resentment, and contempt, in the opinion which it forms of other countries. In many respects England is more insular to-day than it was in the last century. During the fourteen years of peace from 1762 to 1776, her relations with France were uninterrupted. It was the age when Walpole corresponded with Mme. du Deffand. Our books, our philosophies, were the fashion. The disgrace of the Duc de Choiseul, the downfall of our parliaments, were great events in England. English literature had deviated from its own path ; the drama borrowed its inspiration from tragedy and accepted our discipline. The English aristocracy submitted to the ascendancy of the French aristocracy and our polished society. It took lessons of Saint-Evremond, Grammont, Voltaire. The Revolution and the Empire enbroiled England with the continent. Her fortune and even her existence in jeopardy, England, enraged, felt her hatreds and traditionary suspicions revive. The confused drama of our revolutions astonishes and irritates her ; our sudden starts and turns baffle her wisdom. After Louis XIV., after wars and bankruptcy, she thought that nothing remained of France. After

Waterloo, the case becomes different. Our greatness and ever-increasing prosperity disconcert and alarm her. But our mobility makes her more immovable, our lightness makes her more headstrong. Moreover, imitation sits well only on mediocrity. England judges us better, but she does not dream of copying us. Were Hogarth still alive, he would no longer draw the daily contrast between his Englishman, vigorous, wellfed, robust, and his puny Frenchman, a cook and a dancing-master. Our fashions, our literature, our manners, have their adepts across the channel. But perhaps we should not be over-proud of it. This Gallomania goes little beyond our faults and our vices. It thinks to prove its sympathy by ridiculing what does its own country most honor, and by flattering what liberal France detests and dreads.

We should beware of confounding this minority, made up of libertines and idlers, with the nation. This latter is still insular and maintains its sturdy faith in itself. If there be any thing that could really cause it anxiety, it would be the sight of the transformations which the ideal Anglo Saxon policy has been forced to undergo in emigrating to new countries where there was neither royalty nor aristocracy. But so long as its prosperity lasts, so long as its power meets with no reverse, it is not likely to be put out of conceit with that of which itself was the instrument. Like a vessel at anchor, it holds by the past. The contracts upon which its liberties rest do not, like so many constitutions that it has seen perish, lay open vistas of the future ; they emerge from the very gloom of history. They

create no new rights, they confirm ancient ones. Their authority is wrapped in the mists of tradition. The Magna Charta did not establish liberty, it only formulated its guaranties ; it was an effect, not a cause; the flower, not the root.

The men who carried on the revolution of 1688, one of the most daring in history, were preoccupied about the Great Seal that the king had, in his flight, thrown into the Thames. Old parchments, forms, relics, symbols are treated with the *Philistine* respect of Germany. The law is not philosophical, like that of the Latins ; it is organic, resembling a body that is incessantly destroying and renewing itself. Those who carried out the religious reformation preserved all that they could of the ancient faith. Nothing is destroyed but what can no longer be propped up. England is like some ancient forest, where the timber is never felled and the dead trees fall across the living. Routine serves as a sort of top-soil mould to progress. Can it be believed? There were slaves in Scotland down to 1799. The miners were sold with the mines. Children that had never worked in the mine were regarded as free, but how could parents do without their labor? The statute of 1701, which has been boasted of as the Scottish *habeas corpus* act, and which does actually secure the liberty of the individual, has these words : " And sick-like it is hereby provided and declared that this present act is noways to be extended to colliers or salters." The Act of George III. (1799) first proclaimed that the miners " shall be free from their servitude." \*

\* Memorial of his Time, by Henry Cockburn.

This superstitious veneration for the past is only another form of patriotism. England is the Narcissus of history, loving itself, admiring itself, transporting everywhere its manners, its customs, its political ideal. It has conferred upon itself, in Jamaica, the two houses, a Court of the King's Bench, Court of Common Pleas, Exchequer, Chancery, Admiralty, Grand and Petty Juries, Justices of the Peace, Courts of Quarter-Sessions, Coroners, Constables. It no longer makes revolutions because it is always in a state of revolution. But that is putting it too strongly. England is rather undergoing a perpetual metamorphosis, which some say is too slow, others too rapid. Too slow, if we have regard to all that still remains of Gothic institutions, of exceptions, privileges, anomalies, forms, and symbols which are at the present day meaningless. This slowness astonishes the historian. The confusion, the complications to which it gives rise, baffle frequently the wisdom of legislators and judges.

Let us not fall into any error, however, on this point. If the English race loves and respects the fictions with which its ancient institutions are invested, it is because these fictions are expected to serve as a sort of decoration to national greatness. The moment any thing puts in jeopardy the honor, the liberties of the country, the barbarian instinct revives. The untamed Saxon shakes off the fetters that have been laid upon him by Norman subtlety or Roman astuteness. He looks royalty in the face, tosses tribunals, star-chambers, hireling armies, lords, babbling

Commons about like playthings; condemns Strafford, beheads the king, locks up the door of parliament.

History is not a succession of disconnected pictures. Let us not believe that there is no kinship between the England of to-day and the England of Cromwell. The passions that, under Cromwell, burst in such fury against everything that oppressed them are like deep waters flowing quietly before they gather for the plunge.

Strange! After having shown his strength, after having struck a few terrible blows, as if to reassure himself that his power is still intact, the Saxon is glad to return to his repose. The reign of the Round Heads was one of those brief storms that clear the atmosphere. Royalty was restored, but did the fêtes and follies of the Restoration ever cause the terrible end of Charles I. to be forgotten? He had essayed to represent upon the throne of England a *foreign* idea, that idea which the Grand Monarque was to seat upon the throne of France. If we study the portraits of Charles—at Hampton Court or in the Louvre—we shall look in vain for any thing English in that noble, delicate countenance, suggestive of dreams and chimeras.

### III.

Any great national calamity, any terrible blow given to that prestige which is preserved with so much art, persistency, firmness, in all quarters of the globe, would be a sore trial for England, for no other people has a more *naïve* love and admiration for success. The ancient constitution,



which now towers above all parties, would itself be shaken. To those for whom fortune is a god, a reverse is something terrible, for they have nothing that can console them. They feel themselves really debased by defeat. The worship of success is only a transformation of that love of strength which is so natural and so necessary to barbarians. We can understand how the Saxons had hard work to be converted to the religion of a crucified One. The English mind has perhaps never comprehended fully the sublime foolishness of the cross. Its faith is no mysticism, it is a weapon for the struggle of life, a power, an instrument.

The Latin mind is attracted by the weak, the conquered ; the trait is one of generosity, and also of vanity. We imagine naïvely that our friendship and our sympathies will serve as consolation for defeat. The French come out of every war, detesting their allies, and loving their enemies the more heartily the more they have beaten them. But English hatred still runs high even after victory. Weakness seems, to the Anglo-Saxon mind, something to be ashamed of, something bad and culpable. Altogether empirical, it believes that whatever endures, endures rightfully, that whatever triumphs, triumphs rightfully, whatever succumbs, succumbs rightfully. "I say sometimes that strength, well understood, is the measure of all worth. Give a thing time ; if it can succeed, it is the right thing" (Carlyle, *The Hero as Priest*). Milton had said, long before, that to be weak was to be truly wretched.

Still imbued with barbarian faith in destiny, nourished and pervaded by Calvinistic fatalism, the Anglo-Saxon

spirit arms the will against obstacles, but makes it bow down before facts. Celtic imagination has always rebelled against the unknown God, against the irresistible force of facts. Teutonic reason is better regulated. The morrow of the battle of Tolbiacum it was that Clovis hesitated no longer, that he worshipped what he had burned, and burned what he had worshipped. Wealth, fortune, power, the possession of earthly goods, can there be anything *truer*? No aristocracy receives parvenus in better faith than the English. Its winning adulation of them is thoroughly well meant. It absorbs power, talent, wealth, as naturally as a sponge sucks up water. It has none of those innate mistrusts that make the aristocracies of the continent so unbending; while these are always, even in spite of themselves, so many negative poles, it is by nature a positive pole.

The most important organ of the English press, the *Times*, has erected political empiricism into a theory. It always sides with the gods, never with Cato. It begins with one man, and ends with another. Its opinions are the faithful mirror of events. Austrian before the war, it became Italian after Magenta and Solferino. Its contempt of long standing for Prussia was converted on the morrow of Sadowa into unqualified admiration.

The marble of the statues intended for Jefferson Davis and Stonewall Jackson assumed the forms of Lincoln and Grant. There is perhaps more sincerity than calculation, more *naïveté* than cynicism, in this ready obedience to the decrees of force. Between Napoleon I. and England there was, at bottom, only a terrible misunderstanding. What



are rights and justice, if they cannot triumph? During the fluctuations of a long struggle, doubt is permissible, error excusable. But when final judgment has been given, what is the good of protesting? Who can out-reason history?

Has England such full and entire confidence in her own excellence because she has succeeded in everything, or has she succeeded because she has such confidence? It would be difficult to say. Her virtue is closely bound up in her prosperity. If she admires success in the affairs of others, with what passion must she seek it herself? She would cease to believe in her moral primacy, were she to lose its prize. Hence this primacy is her most precious possession, the source from which come her power, and wealth, and liberty. It is to preserve this primacy that statesmen and preachers labor, savans, women, artisans, writers, everything that has an arm or a soul. So many forces, ever active, ever kept on the stretch by conscience, are not occupied in merely maintaining an equilibrium or political institutions. Politics are only the instrument of national will and national ambition. England must be free, because no element of greatness must be wanting. Public interest is the supreme law. No people is more enamored of liberty; yet it has never been able to distinguish its interests from justice. Could anything be good that might harm it? But as soon as its eyes are directed abroad, they are covered by a veil, as it were. These upright judgments become warped, these anxious consciences become hardened, when an enemy, or even a neighbor,

comes in question. No sooner has patriotism caught the alarm than the irresistible force of instinct sweeps away every heart. Beneath the mute pressure of victorious passion, they all bend and turn towards the same pole. No order, no instructions are given. One single will seems to thrill in a twinkling through the entire nation. The press, the rostrum bend to it ; they do not dictate it. All parties do not hold the same language, but in secret they are one. Their very disputes serve, at such times, as instruments for the common passion.

But we should still not have the secret of this robust, intolerant, even at times unjust and cruel, faith, if we could find no other explanation for it than the egoism which is natural to every race and people, the isolation of centuries, the great void that surrounds every island and makes it a little universe in itself. England is by nature insular, but its real originality began only with the Reformation. Ever since then the English people has considered itself the chosen people, the *elect*.

## CHAPTER II.

### *The Characteristics of English Protestantism.*

BEFORE the Reformation, England was only a single bit in the great feudal mosaic. There was nothing to distinguish her from other nations. Protestants are fond of saying that England became free because she made herself Protestant. But how does it happen that she made herself Protestant?

We must add one more to the features by which I have already endeavored to characterize the Anglo-Saxon race. This race is eminently theological. Religion is a necessity to souls that lead a life of gloom, that are attracted to nature, not so much because of the sights she affords to the eye, as on account of her mysteries and her mute forces, souls that are incapable of repose, of joy and beatitude. And what religion can suit them best? The religion of effort. To such a religion struggles of conscience, even the torments of doubt, are precious. England is not devoted to her faith because of the contentment afforded by its full possession but because of the trouble involved in its acquisition. Hence it was that its faith could not remain catholic. We do not know England if we do not look beyond the English constitution.

The constitution is a visible, time-worn veil, a venerable but battered garb covering a soul. And this soul? Is liberty. Not philosophical liberty, founded upon reason, but Christian liberty, the liberty of the children of God, heirs of the promise.

The French revolution was the work of philosophers ; the English, of protestants. Our theorists regarded political liberty as the mother of all other liberties. In England, it was religious liberty that gave birth to them all. The Bible enfranchised and at the same time enslaved the English mind. The barbarian conscience would not have any man as its master, and that man far away, a foreigner, of another race. It acknowledges no other master than God. It listens to and seeks to comprehend God's word. As late as George III., those who refused to believe that the Bible was an inspired book were treated as culprits. For the first offence they were pronounced incapable of taking any public office, for the second offence they were punished by imprisonment for three years and incapacitated for becoming executor or guardian and making or receiving a bequest. The Old Testament is as much read as the New. In court, the witnesses kiss the Bible. The judges on circuit attend divine service. The House of Commons has its chaplain, and every meeting (as in the Congress at Washington) is opened with prayer. Politics and religion have never been divorced. Wilberforce owed the larger share of his parliamentary influence to his religious character. The emancipation of the slaves in the colonies, in which he took such a prominent part, was the

work of the Evangelical party. Canning, at the beginning of a speech upon slavery, speaks for twenty minutes about "the divine Author of our faith." When Mr. Bright makes an allusion to the cave of Adullam, there is not a person, from one end of England to the other, that does not know what he means.

English literature abounds in theological writings and religious tractates. This spring never runs dry. Each generation of doctors leaves behind it the evidences of its faith, its investigations, its efforts. The writings of Butler,\* of Warburton, Middleton, Law, Watts, Whitefield, Wesley, the sermons of Blair, are no longer read ; but all those books have had their readers, and every day fresh ones are born only to be swallowed up in the ever-yawning abyss of theology.

Religion is everywhere, enters into everything, encroaches upon everything. The infidels, for such is the name given to those who dare to reject all religious authority, even that of the scriptures, are but a small band, scattered, timid, not coming in contact with the people. Whenever people speak of Gibbon, the illustrious author of "The Decline and Fall," an infidel and a Voltairean, they always try to make excuses for him.

In 1791, the populace of Birmingham broke into the house of Priestley, the chemist and philosopher, and burned his library and apparatus. He himself was forced to emigrate to America. There have always been philos-

\* Surely the author would not have us believe that Butler is no longer read ! TR.

ophers in England, but there never has been, and there is not even at this day, a philosophical party. The saying is not "No salvation without the church," but "No salvation without a church."

No one is permitted to speak ironically of sacred things; they are protected by a sort of tacit understanding among all the beliefs. We cannot give to this religiousness the name of hypocrisy, even in cases where it is not deep-rooted in faith; for those who cloak themselves in it deceive themselves as much as they deceive others. It is more just to say that the entire country is under a dense religious atmosphere that covers everything, throwing a cloud over politics, legislation, literature, philanthropy, education, manners. Protestantism it is,—not science or philosophy,—that is incessantly at work retouching and perfecting the moral ideal of the nation. It is protestantism that gives temper to its courage, inspires it with the sense of duty, and sustains it in its prolonged effort.

England has had this singular good fortune, that in fighting for its own independence it fought also for the Reformation. It entered in arms in hand. During the long and terrible contests that it waged for civil liberty, and at the same time for religious liberty, it felt itself growing greater and more powerful, richer, freer, more dreaded, more glorious. Its entire history turns, as it were, upon a single idea. It has been able to believe sincerely that it was the people of God, the continuator of the Hebrews, the chosen people, the confidant of Providence, the instrument of His hidden designs, His soldiers against



the impostures, the idolatry, the vanity of the new Gentiles. These barbarians, relegated to a corner of Europe, in fact almost beyond the pale of Europe, have conceived pity and contempt for the old nations spawned of the Roman world, with their kings, their emperors, their pontiffs. *Their* liberty has become a light-house, towards which all the nations of the earth turn their eyes ; their island is the pole of the moral world.

## II.

Rome was too remote from England to make its presence much felt. The barbarian spirit retained more of its wild independence here than in countries subjected for so many centuries to Latin discipline. The Saxons had already refused to pay the Peter's pence when William of Normandy set out to combat Harold and conquer England. We know that Pope Hildebrand had sent him a consecrated banner and a bull, in which, without doubt, he excommunicated Harold and his adherents. The conqueror reëstablished the Peter's pence, and sent Harold's banner to Rome. Hatred of the papacy sprang up in the hearts of the conquered. The Saxon prelates were replaced by Italians and Normans. The people began to look upon the bishops as enemies.

But William himself soon shook off papal ties. He refused to pay homage to Hildebrand, and separated the jurisdiction of the counts from that of the bishops. The ecclesiastical judge still retained not a little power, and

Rome continued to be, for certain matters, the supreme court of appeals, but the lay judge became independent.

England was not carried away by the madness of the crusades. She took up arms only in the second, and even the adventures of Richard Cœur de Lion constitute an episode in the history of chivalry rather than an event in the history of England. Henry II. had already begun the attack upon the church. The constitutions of Clarendon subjected the clergy to the common law. The papal protection was fatal to Thomas à Becket. The thunders of excommunication hurled from Rome had spent their force on reaching Canterbury. Henry's submission after the murder of Becket,—slaughtered in a cowardly manner on the steps of the altar,—was only a hypocritical lie.

King John had to pay for his servility to the pope by the concession of Magna Charta. Having kneeled before the papal legate, he was now to bow before his own barons. The moral leader of the rebellious aristocracy was an English bishop, Langton. Magna Charta was the treaty of alliance between the prelates and the barons. The church was already converting itself from being catholic to being national.

For one century the same forces continue to operate : the jealousy of the crown, the pride of the prelates, the isolation of the country, the growing hatred of France. Little by little, under the reigns of the three Edwards, England, urged on more by instinct than by conscious intent, shakes off the ties that unite it to Catholic unity. For one hundred and fifty years after the Conquest the kings had them-



selves nominated the bishops, the archbishops, and the mitred abbots. After the concession of Magna Charta, however, the chapters, now become independent, nominate their bishops and ask of the king only an empty "leave to elect." But the pope has to approve of the election before the bishop can be consecrated and receive the bull of investiture. The same with the mitred abbots. The superiors of all the orders continue in communication with Rome. For the petty benefices and monasteries there are local patrons, laymen or clergy. But whenever any new institution is created, Rome is consulted as to forms.

In 1306, however, an act of parliament forbids the superiors of orders resident out of England to levy taxes in English houses (Cistercians, Premonstrants, and the orders of St. Augustine and St. Benedict). Still they do not yet dare to attack the pope. But the statute of 1351 Edward III. is aimed at him. For the first time the rebellious parliament denies to the head of Christendom the right of ecclesiastical patronage in England. The struggle was long. The commons interpose themselves between the crown and the papal thunderbolts, they defend their national sovereignty, their soil, from foreign masters. The spiritual lords do not separate their cause from that of the lords temporal. All three estates rally around the king. The statute of *Præmunire* (16 Richard II. c. 5. 1392) provides: That any person purchasing in the court of Rome or elsewhere any provisions, excommunications, bulls or other instruments whatsoever, and any person bringing such instruments within the realm, or receiving

them, or making notification of them, shall be put out of the King's protection, their lands and goods shall be forfeited, and they themselves, if they can be found, shall be attached and brought before the king and council, there to answer for their offence.

The way of the Reformation is prepared, first, by the resistance of parliament, second, by the uprisings of conscience and morality against the abuses of the church. Chaucer scathes monks, false relics, vendors of indulgences, in his verses. The emancipated serfs do not know what is heresy and what orthodoxy. They listen to the "poor priests" who spread throughout England the teachings of John Wycliffe. They are not astonished when they are informed that a bishop or a priest in a state of mortal sin has no authority over the faithful, that the scriptures forbid the ministers of the Lord having worldly goods, that confession is not so needful as contrition. From the very first day these two reformations confront one another, jealous rivals: the episcopal reformation and the popular reformation, the reformation of the lofty and the reformation of the lowly.

Wycliffe himself was led astray by his dreams of primitive christianity. He attacks the right of property, pronounces the forfeiture of the possessions of the sinner. The people take him at his word. London is sacked by the rabble who follow Wat Tyler. The lords, affrighted, wish to persecute the "poor priests," the vagabond apostles. But Wycliffe has still influence enough to protect them. By his death the Lollards lose their guide, their

luminary ; they soon come to be regarded as only vile fanatics and rebels, and are persecuted without mercy. It is against them that the act *de heretico comburendo* is passed (1400).

Oldcastle attempts to rekindle the embers of heresy. He stirs up the last of the Lollards, and pays for the mad attempt with his life. Apparently nothing remains of Wycliffe's work. The name of Oldcastle has become a laughing-stock, Shakespeare turns it into his Falstaff. Yet something has remained,—Wycliffe's Bible. What men have not been able to do, a book shall do. Manuscript copies circulate from hand to hand, secretly ; for a ferocious statute has interdicted the work of the Oxford reformer. Heresy grows up in the shade, in the fear of the scaffold. The spirit is weaving its invisible web for a hundred years, like a spider at work in the lofty cathedral arches.

Why did Luther's terrible cry find immediate echo in England ? The Saxons recognized a brother in the daring Saxon monk. The new doctrines, soon in possession of the ports of the North Sea, of Sweden and Denmark, were known to the sailors and merchants and carried by them to a soil all ready to receive them. The first protestant books, printed in Flanders, were smuggled in bales. Everything might be printed in the Free Towns (Sir Thomas More sends over the manuscript of his *Utopia*). The pulsations of the German heart were felt immediately in England. Tyndale visits Luther at Wittenberg (1525.)

translates the Gospels and Epistles, and establishes at Antwerp a protestant bookstore.

The first English Protestants were nobodies. In 1526 a few weavers, carpenters and shoemakers organize themselves into the "Christian Brotherhood." They have a committee in London, and purchase Bibles. They have agencies and colporteurs of the divine word. The habits of the clergy,—who go unchecked and revel in fat livings,—are more revolting to the people than to the upper classes. These christians have the *naïve* belief that religion does not consist altogether in pomp, ceremonies, and formulas. They conceive the true temple of God to be the soul, purified, sanctified and chaste. They worship in spirit. What effect can persecution have upon these souls whose life is with things invisible? Of what avail to burn bibles in front of St. Paul's? The secret disease spreads even to the city of the clergy, Oxford; it insinuates itself into Christ Church, the magnificent college founded by Wolsey. In vain does Wolsey turn persecutor, in vain More. In 1531 Bainham is burned for daring to deny transubstantiation and assert, "that a Turk, a Jew, or a Saracen who believes in God and keeps his law is a good Christian."

Other forces are at work in parliament. No sooner has that body met in 1329 than it submits to the king a petition which is virtually a long indictment of the ecclesiastical courts, clerical rapacity, and nepotism. Parliamentary reform was the uprising of the common law against the canonical, the gentry against the bishops.

Have not the latter dared to demand of Henry VIII. that the common law be changed wherever it clashes with the canonical, and refused to submit canonical decrees to the royal sanction? Thus everything tended to the Reformation. Who is going to be persuaded into believing, in this our day, that this great event was born only of the passion of an amorous king? His will drifted from obedience to revolt. Beginning by defending the pope against Luther, he ended by making himself pope. He changes his theology as he changes his nuptial couch. Yet every crime is pardoned in a king who rejects Romish tyranny. He burns as heretics those who are for the Reformation, but he hangs those who recognize the authority of Rome. He confiscates the estates of the convents, which had become owners of a fourth part of the soil. The ancient rites are thrown aside, the ancient altars broken, the stoles torn in pieces; the episcopate barely escapes. But royalty clings to it instinctively, not from love for Rome but from love for what had made Rome's visible grandeur. Servile Cranmer takes the middle course between Rome and Geneva. He makes the king the temporal and spiritual sovereign of the country, entrusts him with the right of binding and loosing, the right of ordaining priests. A sanguinary code suppresses all resistance.

Even at this day England is not shocked overmuch at the apparition of this superb and terrible king, this pontiff and dictator, whose favor was as much to be dreaded as his wrath, whose love was a death-warrant. The marriage

that he had tried to bring about between Catholic doctrines and Anglican independence ended badly, like all his marriages. After his death, the Reformation was mistress of England. The reign of Mary was only an interregnum. Her terrible persecutions, the execution of Cranmer, made the name of Rome an object of horror with the nation. England had its *autos-da-fé*, like Spain. The figure of Philip, Mary's husband, crosses the stage of English history for a moment, like the spectre of the inquisition. During this brief reign two hundred and eighty persons were burned. The inquisition was on the point of establishing its tribunals in Great Britain, and thus clutching Europe at both ends, when Mary died. With Elizabeth protestantism ascended the throne. The passionate devotion with which she inspired her people was preëminently a religious passion, a fanaticism. Under her at last triumphed the idea—so dear to the English people—of an English national church. This word “national church,” which causes the philosopher to smile as much as would that of “national God,” does not cause the politician any astonishment, for religious belief is a political power. There is always a community of feeling, hidden or manifest, among all the catholic peoples, among the protestant peoples, among the Mussulmen.

The historic greatness of Elizabeth is due to this, that she was from the very first conscious of her mission. The woman was subservient to the queen. Had she not been a protestant, she were a usurper, a bastard. She makes haste to reject Romish supremacy. Refractory bishops



are replaced by proscribed theologians. The flood of the Reformation, checked for awhile, sweeps away everything, but of nine thousand four hundred priests who are called upon to conform to the new ritual, only two hundred remain true to the ancient faith and give up their livings. Among the lower orders of the clergy there was no secession.

### III.

Elizabeth had on her side the protestants of England and Scotland, the States-General, the King of Navarre ; but Mary Stuart had Rome, France, Spain. The war between the two religions became a duel between two women. Elizabeth, so humane at the outset and almost tolerant, became terrible when Pius V. excommunicated the *pretended* queen of England. The throne was her honor, heresy her salvation. The passions of the girl, the woman and the rival will explain her whole conduct.

But for Scotland, it is doubtful whether she would have triumphed. We might be astonished at first sight, perhaps, that the Reformation should make its way among a people so obstinately attached to its traditions. At the commencement of the sixteenth century Scotland is still feudal. No large cities, no independent bourgeoisie. The poor, unproductive country is only a perpetual field of battle. The folk is wretched and superstitious; the barons are rapacious, jealous, always plundering, always at swords' points. The war with England has lasted a thousand years. The Celts

of the mountains and the descendants of the Scandinavians settled in the valleys waste their courage and their hereditary ferocity in fruitless contests. Royalty is the vassal of the great nobles. The church holds half the soil. We cannot doubt but that this wealth disposed the hearts of the barons to the Reformation. The new religion, like the old, assured them of heaven, without denying them the object of their desires upon earth.

But the Reformation did not at first entice the great. It made its way into the fields and hovels, among the lowly. It gave a soul to this people without one, it spake with stern voice to these sons of the pirates, these brigands, it won over these wild hearts by the very pangs, the terrors and struggles of spiritual life. They preferred Mosaic rigidity to the infinite gentleness of the New Testament, the inspired word and the threatening exhortations, the reproaches and objurgations, of preachers to symbolic pomp. The clannish spirit found expression in congregations and presbyteries, but a grand hierarchy, whether catholic or anglican, could not suit so well a nation of a rebellious turn of mind. If the English mind suggests to us a uniform plain sweeping away to the distant horizon, the Scotch rather suggests the narrow upper valleys of the mountain, shut in with a girdle of rock and forest. The grand blasts of the centuries scarcely reach these remote and petty associations, where conscience is at work slowly distilling intolerance. Here the Scotch character was formed, a character marked by love of self-imposed rule, by a sturdy and rough good sense, by calculating honesty,



sardonic taciturnity and shrewd bonhomie. Judging by the roughness, the quick sallies, and the keenness that this character has preserved even in our day, we can imagine what Scotland must have been in the times of John Knox and the Lords of the Congregation. Men who never dreamed of shrinking from death were to inflict it on others with startling serenity. Combats, danger, prolonged hatreds, were to them a necessity.

Religious passion, in itself sombre and cruel, was still more inflamed by national passion. Could a French queen, the tool of her Lorraine brothers, surrounded by popish soldiers and gentlemen, be anything else than an enemy? Scarcely is the breath out of James, when the Lords of the Congregation declare war upon his widow. Knox excites and supports them, and revives their spirits depressed by the unfortunate siege of Leith. Elizabeth, now the soul of the protestant league, sends subsidies to the Scotch.

As soon as the Scottish parliament got a little elbow-room, the entire structure of catholic hierarchy was demolished in a day. Never had the like been seen before; the church was ruined by her very excess of power. She had slowly acquired more than one half the land in Scotland, and that the most fertile part. The bishops and abbots were accomplices in the work of spoliation. No resistance, no martyrs. The estates of the clergy were delivered up to the greedy nobles by the clergy themselves. Only a small fraction of the revenues was reserved for the new clergy. Knox had demanded that there should be a division by thirds: one third for the

clergy, one for the schools, one for the poor. Instead of this, the nobles made terms with the bishops so as to get everything. They left scarcely a sixth to the presbyteries. "Two parts," says Knox, "went to the devil, and the third was divided between the devil and God." The Church of Scotland became the poorest, the most wretched in the world. Numbers of ministers had to content themselves with an income of one hundred Scottish marks, less than six pounds sterling.

Yet Knox's bargain with the lords is capable of explanation. They wanted the land, he did not want prelacy. To him the episcopacy was almost as much an object of horror as the papacy.

In England, owing to the conjuncture of events, the Reformation had been effected with the aid of the king. In Scotland it was effected without royalty and even in spite of royalty. Hence it could take a very different course. Still the two reformations felt a certain solidarity of interest. Elizabeth, although hating Knox, is obliged to back his cause. Both pursue the same chimerical ideal, doctrinal unity. Faith must be freely inquired after in the sacred books, but all souls must find there the same faith. Tolerance of error seems almost a crime, heresy is persecuted rigorously. Knox witnesses the burning of a sorceress before his own eyes. Elizabeth persecutes the Anabaptists and Puritans. The elder Melvine, preaching before James VI., says to him, "There are two kings and two kingdoms. There is Christ and his kingdom, the Church, of which King James is the subject, and

of this kingdom he is neither the king, nor the head, nor the lord, but a simple member." In England, church and state are one. In Scotland, civil society is only the handmaid of a greater society of which Christ is the King. Pastors regard themselves as the natural guides of the state, and lecture the sovereign. Knox makes Mary Stuart tremble. The chaplains of the weak-minded James liken his favorites to Haman, himself to Herod or Jeroboam. The distinction between the spiritual and the temporal was rather subtle for barons wishing to round off their estates and at the same time win heaven, for a royalty that wishes to remain master of both soul and body. The church of Christ was to become a visible church, stronger, more powerful, more tenacious than its neighbors. Liberty engendered the spirit of sect, and the spirit of sect engendered tyranny.

The sickly child of Mary Stuart had in his hand, for a moment, the lot of both countries. He could not love the Reformation with a sincere love ; he disputed the right of pastors to convert all their pulpits into rostrums, and, dying, advised his sons to trust rather a wild Highlander, a ferocious borderer, than a Puritan. Could he regard Elizabeth, whose alliance and degrading deviation he submitted to, otherwise than with secret horror? He cherished in his mind the chimera of the divine right of kings and made a timid attempt to restore episcopacy in Scotland, but he found himself carried away incessantly by the character of his royal title, by the dangers of his position, perhaps by his very scruples and remorse,

Having become king of England, he found in his new country one half of the population still catholic. One third of the peers, the half of the rural gentry, two thirds of the peasantry had remained true to the ancient faith.

The real notions of the king betray themselves in these words, uttered to the ambassador, La Broderie (June twentieth, 1606): "If the pope would consent to be the chief and first of bishops, there would be no difficulty in recognizing him as such. But as to his setting himself above kings, not one ought to submit to it." Puisieux, French secretary, writes, July twenty-second, 1608, to Rome: "James consents to recognize the pope as the primate of bishops, if he will renounce his pretended right of interdicting kings."

Disputatious and theological, James argued with the Puritans. His aphorism was; "No bishop, no king." He would have liked for all England "one doctrine, one discipline, one religion, both in substance and in ceremony." He wished to retain the cross and the surplice.

James' tolerance exasperated the Puritans more than the persecutions of Elizabeth had done. The latter troubled their faith without disturbing their hatred, for Rome was still the common enemy. But when the eyes of royalty were redirected to the ancient religion, the king, his servile bishops, and his official church became objects of suspicion. From that time the Puritans believe themselves to be the real representatives of the Reformation. Their church becomes the church militant, their ministers are the lieutenants of the army of the Lord, the soldiers of that Jesus

who had come not to bring peace upon earth but a sword. The new ritual reminds them too much of the Romish. They wish no more sacerdotal ornaments, no host, no genuflexions. The sombre spirit of the Lollards revives in them. Some ministers refuse to baptize children by other than scriptural names. The new saints assume symbolic names, such as Deliverance, Discipline, Earth, Dust, Fight the Good Fight, etc., just as subsequently the French republicans take the names of Brutus and Demosthenes.

The peculiar feature of this new protestantism is that for written prayer, the written word, become an empty form, it substitutes the living word, inspiration, the sermon. What power it was to derive from that change! Nothing works upon men so much as human speech. He seems to be present at, to participate in, a sort of creation. Improvisation unchecked by rule follows wherever the spirit leads, touches upon everything, recoils from nothing. The Puritan minister is a tribune all the more audacious because God seems to speak through his mouth. He clothes politics in familiar words and phrases, expressions taken from the scriptures. His eloquence has in it something impersonal. It envelops itself in mystic terrors, the lightnings and thunder of Sinai, all the while addressing the most direct, the most sordid, earthly interests. It confounds the vulgar and the divine, passion and faith.

## IV.

The development of the Puritan spirit marks a new era in religious history. On certain points the new sectaries resemble those famous orders that propagated the catholic faith and made themselves apostles of the christian ideal. But whereas these latter point the people to heaven, the Puritans point it to earth. The barbarian spirit of the Anglo-Saxons cannot be content with a kingdom that is not of this world. The church of Christ must be established here below, heaven must begin on earth. No mercy for those who dare to molest this occupancy of the saints. The noble catholic ideal, by consoling the Christian for poverty, oppression, and his own weakness, disarms him for attack, either upon others or himself. The Puritan ideal inspires him with indomitable energy.

Shall I be saved? Shall I be lost? That is the terrible question which no one can answer with assurance. But since by faith alone the sinner is justified, faith alone can remove his dread of the inexorable future and give him some trembling hope. He clings, then, to his faith as his only chance of salvation, seeks it out, would fain feel it, as the mother feels the movements of the child she has conceived. What better way of recognizing it than by the bursts of anger and horror that he experiences toward impiety? How can one find the gold in a deposit without rejecting the sand and mud? Whatever is vain



seems to him something to be regretted and put aside, such as bells, statues, pictures, frivolous amusements, dancing, the popular sports and pagan festivities of Christmas. The Puritans wish to dress England in black. They assume a sombre mien, wear their hair straight and long, speak in a sort of biblical jargon. This constant effort of the will is recognizable even in the nasaled intonations of the voice.

The Gunpowder Plot raised the hatred of Rome and the Jesuits to the highest pitch of frenzy. Popular imagination could dream of nothing but crimes. At the death of James I., the established church was half heretic. To all appearance, the edifice of royal and episcopal faith stood very firm, a high court of commission punished every attack upon its liturgy and doctrines. But the last primate, Abbot, had opened softly the doors of the church to Puritan teachings.

Laud endeavored to rectify the evil ; he proclaimed in his canons the divine right of kings. The non-conformists emigrated to Holland and New England. Charles, supported by his obedient bishops, thought the moment had arrived to introduce bishops into Scotland. The owners of the former estates of the church, the Presbyterians, and the Puritans form a coalition against him. The struggle begins. The king and his primate pursue this dream : namely to reunite the Church of England to the Church of Rome, but maintaining the principles and independence of the Church of England. They are aware of the attachment of the country to old traditions.



The Anglican bishops have never consented to relinquish the sacred privilege of apostolic succession. They are what they wish to be, the successors of the apostles. Is not the laying on of hands the outward sign of a sort of religious heirship, like the monarchical principle? Elizabeth and her councillors had not been willing to give up this privilege. The scholars of Oxford, from whom the bishops were chosen, were less English, we might say than the rest of the nation. Belles-lettres, their habit as schoolmen, connected them closely with Europe. They formed a sort of intellectual aristocracy, rather refined for one of the coarsest of generations. The lower clergy, poorly off, rendered still more plebeian since the impoverishment of the church by Henry's reformation, were little more than upper servants in the houses of the nobility. A young lady of rank could not marry a priest. Chaplains took their wives among chambermaids. The country priests were ignorant, brutal, and servile. The prelates, a petty caste among the clergy, cherished the memory of the splendors of Wolsey. Without sharing all the passions of the Stuarts, they made themselves their obsequious servants. The Anglican church became monarchical. It departed more and more from Calvin, from the Presbytery, from all republican teachings, and approximated more to Arminius.

The danger for the Reformation was great. Scotland met the injunctions of Laud with the Covenant. Noblemen, ministers, men of every class, swore to resist all religious innovations, to labor in restoring purity of faith,

to root out heresy, and to become living examples of Christian virtue. In England, the two confronting parties were about equal. On the one hand, the king and bishops, all that adhered to them, all that admired the outward splendor of the monarchy and the episcopate. On the other, the Puritans, the bourgeois, the merchants of London, who traded with the Low Countries, who admired the prosperity of the Free Towns and had applauded the heroic struggle of a republic against the Spaniards. Money has already become a new power in the state. Parliament takes it in charge and defends private wealth against the king.

The reformation effected by the crown is on the point of betraying the protestant cause. The second reformation is a parliamentary one. The Commons convert themselves into a veritable ecumenical council. They wish to extirpate every vestige of Rome, to cut it down "root and branch." Political liberty is the sword of faith. The founders of parliamentary government are not so much statesmen as doctors, casuists, theologians. When Scotland sends her army to the aid of parliament, this is the proclamation that marches at the head : Our conscience and God, who is above our conscience, bear us witness that we desire only the glory of God, the peace of the two nations, and the honor of the king, by suppressing and punishing by law those who trouble Israel, the Korahs, the Baalams, the Doegs, the Rabshakehs, the Hamans, the Tobiahs, the Sanballats of our times. This done, we shall

be content.—The bishops are “priests of Baal.” The liturgy is called ironically “lethargy.”

Parliament becomes an arena for the doctors. Shall people bow, or not, at the name of Jesus? Shall there be a grating before the altar? Shall the choir be higher than the nave? These are the questions discussed. The bishops are driven out of the House of Lords. Parliament proclaims the sovereignty of the people. It dares to say that the government belongs to the citizens, that kings may be deposed. The soldiers of parliament drink upon the altar of Westminster, and bivouac in the venerable abbey. Churches are torn down, statues demolished from hatred of Laud. Horses and pigs are baptized in chapels, tombs are desecrated and the dust of the dead scattered to the winds. The chambers force all the members of the clergy to swear allegiance to the Covenant. Priests who have been ordained by bishops are called upon to aid in destroying episcopal regime. Seven thousand refuse to take the oath. An enormous number, showing how deeply rooted the established religion was, and what great moral authority it still possessed. This profound hostility, hiding its head in the fields, wearing a threatening mien in the castles, goaded the passion of the Puritans to frenzy. England witnessed at that time something like the scenes in France at the end of the last century.

Royalty is disarmed and a prisoner. The Presbyterians would fain save it. They were the first to strike it down, but they dread to see that institution fall which serves as the pillar of English history and the English constitution.

Slaves to form, they always pretended, even while fighting against the king, to fight for royalty. Opposed to them are the Independents, to whom forms and fictions matter little. They have fought with the Bible in one hand, the sword in the other. Their only constitution is the scriptures. They are soon masters.

Why enter into any humble negotiations at Hampton Court with this man, who is only a king now because people still speak of His Majesty? What he promises with his lips, can he promise it with his heart? "For all our battles," says Cromwell, "we should have nothing but a scrap of paper."

Cromwell, in this terrible hour, represents brute force, that England which, trailing its long drapery of the past, can yet, in certain emergencies when its progress is impeded and it has need of all its strength, throw off and rend to pieces these useless vestments and step forth naked as a barbarian gladiator. *Luxuriatque toris animosum pectus.*

The empty noise of parliamentary disputes soon becomes wearisome to this taciturn soldier. England, Scotland, and Ireland are overthrown; what is to become of parliament? It has no longer any pole, any equilibrium. It seeks a new sovereign. Why should not this new sovereign be the nation? There is talk of equalizing the electoral districts, of unrestricted suffrage, of a kind of *Assemblée constituante*. Cromwell interrupts the dream by remaining alone as dictator and Protector. He derives his right from might. He knows that at least the half of

England is silenced but not convinced. He believes himself to be the Moses of the new elect. He is a humble, grave, sombre master, oppressed at times by the weight of responsibility that Providence has placed upon him. He knows his nation, would like to restore one chamber. But no sooner are his parliaments convened than they interrogate him and call upon him for his titles.

What is the real question at the bottom of all these troubles, this disorder, this ridiculous jargon of sects, this perturbation of minds? All concur on one point. The state must be religious, it must not be atheistic, indifferent, or sceptical. But shall the state be subordinate to the church, or the church to the state? Shall temporal interests yield to spiritual, or vice versa? Shall the law settle faith, or faith the law? A new cult had been set up in place of the old. Psalms and sermons had been substituted for ceremonies. No more symbols of faith or church commandments. Even the Lord's prayer had been proscribed, and everything that might remind one of a doctrine of tradition, regulation, and obedience. The human soul was to express itself freely in speech and song. Cromwell tried to check the most violent excesses of this license, to suppress the unwholesome growth of sects. His terrible dictatorship did not succeed in destroying the invisible forces that bind England to the past, to monarchical and episcopal institutions, but it kept them in impotence long enough to insure the future possibility of dissenting churches existing side by side with the Establishment.

## V.

This is evident from what ensued. The Reformation had passed through these phases. At first it had been royal, then parliamentary, at last theocratic. Every great moral resolution ends in compromise, for there is almost always something necessary and legitimate in each one of the interests contending for victory. The Puritan cause might have seemed for a moment utterly lost. England, worn out, barren, exhausted as if by a long fast, fell back into the arms of royalty and episcopacy. The Restoration was an orgy. The sternly chaste muse of Milton was driven out by shameless courtesan muses. It is the self-chastisement of all tyranny to wear out the most profound springs of action in the human heart, making them a thing of no avail, without strength and without repute. As we see the licentious Directory succeeding, in France, the Reign of Terror, so the reign of the Puritans was followed by the reign of pleasure.

Charles II. was by nature not so much tolerant as indifferent and indolent. As soon as he had set foot on English soil, the former bishops showed their heads. The Presbyterians, in a majority in the House of Commons, hoped for a moment that they would be able to establish their liturgy. But the king was of the opinion that the Presbytery "was not a religion fit for a gentleman." He first tried tolerance, in order to rehabilitate the nation to the ceremonies proscribed by the Presbyterians. He



then published an act of uniformity excluding from the established church such ministers as had not received episcopal ordination. At the same time all ministers were required to subscribe to a declaration stigmatizing resistance to the king as illegal under any pretext whatever.

It is easy to see how the minds of men had become worn and bent by civil war. It will be remembered that more than seven thousand ministers had given up their livings rather than subscribe to the Covenant. The new Act of Uniformity evoked only two thousand protests. Non-conformist ministers were forbidden to settle or return within five miles of their former church (Five Miles Act). Dissenters and Catholics were involved in the same disgrace. But the king arrogated to himself the right of suspending the penal laws, a right by which the Catholics alone would have profited. This assumption aroused both the Anglicans and the enemies of the royal prerogative, and the Commons frustrated the plans of the king by passing the Test Act, which remained in force as late as George IV. This act compelled every public officer, civil or military, to take the oath of supremacy, to sign a declaration against transubstantiation, and to commune in public according to the rites of the Church of England.

Henceforth there were two nations, as it were, within the nation. The Anglican Church, once more Episcopal, marked the boundaries of a sort of legalized religious country. Outside those boundaries, the fragments of the Puritan sects continued to vegetate, but formed, together



with the Catholics, a caste without political rights and laboring under the most revolting civil disabilities.

The spirit of sect had killed political liberty. Political liberty turned against the spirit of *sect*. It remained true to Protestantism, but regulated and organized it after a fashion. Parliament could not have for its enemy a church whose laws it protected, whose ranks it had recruited, whose enemies it had weakened. The church became the creature of the state, instead of being its ruler or its rival.

The secret hostility of royalty to Protestantism still continued. The king, and his catholic brother, the Duke of York, belong less to England than to Louis XIV. By signing the shameful treaty of Dover (1670), Charles became the vassal of France. As soon as the nation suspected the king, protestant passion became once more a sort of rage. Excited imaginations saw plots everywhere. The stories of Titus Oates found credence. The alliance between Parliament and the Established Church was drawn closer. The Commons wished to exclude the Duke of York from the succession, and the minds of the people were turned to Monmouth, an illegitimate son of the king. The eloquence of Halifax, however, succeeded in moving the lords to throw out the Bill of Exclusion. The king triumphed, and the reaction of the Tories against their adversaries was terrible. Monmouth was exiled, Russel and Sidney perished on the Scaffold. The Duke of York, although excluded by the Test Act from public office, took his place in the Council. On his

death-bed, Charles II. received the sacrament from the hands of a Catholic priest. With his successor, James II., Catholicism ascended the throne. After one hundred and twenty-seven years of exile, it reëntered Westminster.

Had James himself been tolerant, he might, perhaps, have succeeded in establishing the principle of tolerance and obtaining the abrogation of the penal laws bearing upon Catholics and Dissenters. But his intolerance and bad faith ruined everything. He was a born persecutor. He called upon the Scottish parliament for still more ferocious laws against the refractory Presbyterians. Death and confiscation of property were pronounced against such as should preach in closed conventicles or be present at conventicles held in the open air. Not merely did James wish to restore to Catholics civil and political equality ; he even aspired to make Catholicism once more the state religion and to suppress all the others, like his neighbor in France. He attempted to reduce to complete subjection a parliament that he had found composed almost altogether of Tories devoted to the royal cause. He permitted his nephew, Monmouth, to be executed, because the people loved the young rebel as a protestant prince. After the "bloody assizes," he makes Jeffreys his chancellor. He attempts to convert the people by publishing the private papers of Charles I., the martyr-king. He makes the courts adjudicate to him the right of *dispensing* individual Catholics from the operation of laws passed against them. He profits by this to fill the army with Catholics. To them he gives livings, positions in the universities. He

endeavors to make use of his ecclesiastical supremacy for creating a court of High Commission, destined to oppress the church. He confers upon five commissioners absolute authority over the bishops, and sets Jeffreys among the number. The bishop of London is suspended from his spiritual functions. In Scotland, in like manner, the king resorts to his ecclesiastical supremacy. He admits Catholics to the highest offices, all the while continuing to persecute the Presbyterians. He announces his intention of opening a Catholic chapel in Holyrood palace. The spiritual head of two churches, he turns his authority against both.

Having perceived that he could not convert the Anglicans, he essayed to form a league with the Dissenters. He published a proclamation of "indulgence," and permitted the public exercises of all the cults. He suspended not only penal laws but political disabilities based upon religion. The Dissenters wavered for a moment. But English passion soon carried the day. They became the allies of the Anglican against the Romish church, of the parliament against the king. The latter still held out, and made a second proclamation of indulgence and ordered it to be read in all the churches. Seven bishops disobeyed. On the day when they were led to the Tower, James ceased to be king. The entire nation appeared with the bishops before the court of King's Bench. Their acquittal was the deliverance of the nation. The last of the Stuarts had united everything against himself, aristocratic, hierarchical, episcopal Protestantism, and leveling, popular Protest-

antism, the spirit of Laud and the spirit of Cromwell. The clergy that had suffered so much innocent blood to be shed, that had delivered over everything to royalty, now made common cause with sectaries. What the murder of Elizabeth Gaunt, Alice Lisle, Monmouth, Argyle, what the infamous deeds of Jeffreys had not been able to do, was done by the arrest of the bishops. The sons of the Cavaliers and the sons of the Puritans found themselves fighting in the same ranks. The Revolution suppressed for a moment the wretched sectarian spirit and united all the Protestants.

The Revolution of 1688 was religious rather than political. Hatred of papacy had more to do with it than love of law. As soon as the people heard of the flight of James, they turned their rage upon the Catholic churches, chapels and convents, against the printing-office in which the royal pamphlets had been published, and against the ambassadors of the Catholic powers. Scotland rose to a man and disarmed the Catholics.

William was a good Protestant but no sectary. He showed favor to all reformists. His wife went to the length of saying that she could see no difference among the Protestant churches. But the new dynasty owed everything to a coalition of the higher Anglican clergy and the upper nobility. Foreign by origin, absorbed in European politics and able to take only a hasty and preoccupied glance at England, it accepted as a matter of course the role of arbiter which the English aristocracy was henceforth to impose upon its sovereigns. The

aristocracy, already master of parliament, had need of an aristocratic church. The church became the partner of its grandeur, the instrument of its policy, its mouthpiece with the nation, one of the supports of that power which has for its accomplices, so to speak, nature and English soil.

We see once more something similar to the partition of the feudal conquest among the king, the church, and the barons. Only, this time the latter got the lion's share. The clergy was no longer protected against the nobles by celibacy, by the confessionàl, by the prestige of a mystic, strange, and almost supernatural life. The priests became the clients of the landed aristocracy, the church made itself the servant of the castle. Even doctrinal authority itself was subjected to the metamorphosis and the caprices of political authority. Episcopal pomp cannot hide the dependence of the Church. In vain does it drape itself in its apostolic origin. Everybody knows what is the source of its symbols of faith, everybody knows that parliament might, if it saw fit, lay hands upon the Act of Uniformity or the Thirty Nine Articles. When the two powers, the spiritual and the temporal, are confounded, either the priest must absorb the layman, or the layman the priest. In England, the religious sovereign has remained subordinate to the secular sovereign. The Anglican church helps to support a political edifice of which it is but a part. It submits to laws discussed and voted upon by laymen some of whom do not even acknowledge its doctrinal authority. It is a proprietary

church, deriving its independence from its wealth; a political church, that has ever defended aristocratic privileges and extolled the good old constitution, in a word, a terrestrial church. It was just the church to suit a society fond of strength, power, visible grandeur, incapable of divorcing for any length of time dream and reality, accustomed to estimate merit by fortune, and captivated with itself so naïvely as to accept the favors of fortune as the natural recompense for its virtues.

No discrepancy between practical life and the ideal. Social duty and religious duty blend and interpenetrate so completely that they have become, as it were, inseparable. Importunity of thought does not throw the mind off its balance, but finds freedom enough within the bounds of national doctrine to avoid, with rare exceptions, the temptation of escaping from them. The thirty-nine articles shelter as well that indolent faith which seeks only repose and loves to feel itself borne along by the multitude and by tradition, as the more mobile faith which, like a climbing plant, throws out its tendrils in every direction but without detaching itself from the tree-stem. The aristocracy found a natural ally in a church, rich, well-endowed, independent enough to escape the semblance of servitude, carrying a political spirit into religion, and serving as a living bond of union between high and low.

By the side of this fortunate and powerful religion,—a sort of compromise between Catholicism and Protestantism, as the constitutional monarchy is a compromise between monarchical and republican ideals,—there was



only an obscure place left for Puritan protestantism, for religion suffering and unfortunate. On the outskirts of political society, compact, embracing as if in apotheosis royalty, Lords, Commons, and a small body of obedient electors, there was a great people, without a voice, without rights, a sort of social residuum and subsoil upon which flourished the tree of aristocracy. Here were hidden away the petty Protestant churches. Landed wealth, inherited wealth, easy circumstances, flourished in the shadow of the official church. The hard-earned wealth of merchants and traders demanded another church. Faith was more restless and lively in men engaged in business and manufactures, men of little or no means. It was the only spark of life in these dull, methodical existences. It answered them in place of pride, and consoled them for their unjust nothingness. Commerce and industry built up a second England by the side of England that measures herself by acres. The field laborers belonged to the one, the city workmen to the other. In their petty and despised churches was revived the tradition of the Lollards, those Puritan preachers who could hew out a pulpit with the hatchet before speaking in it, those theologians who did not know how to read, those ministers who regarded all reading but the Bible as sinful. Here was kept alive the hatred and invincible mistrust of Catholicism. Here the people heard again and again that the Catholic church justifies the means for the end, authorizes every crime committed with a view to the triumph of the church. The High Church, the



tool of the aristocracy, thought only of increasing its wealth. Burnet complained that the Anglican clergy was the most despised in Europe ; its habits were loose, its avidity unparalleled, it was completely indifferent to the happiness of the people. A new reformation became necessary to restore it to a sense of its duties. This Wesley accomplished. He modified the spirit of the Church, and effected, without civil war, a religious revolution.

## VI.

This singular man was a sort of Protestant apostle, or monk. Attracted by asceticism, he went to America, while very young, to live some time with the Moravian brethren. He has his ecstasies, and works miracles like a saint, by the power of his faith. He breaks down the barriers of the Anglican church and proposes to himself to save all men. His catholic love embraces all sinners, great and small. He bestows upon them his tears, his mystic, ardent, eloquent preaching. Especially does he arouse diseased minds, the disordered imaginations of the poor. His faith is like those epidemics that rage through the most unhealthy parts of a city.

He preaches in the open air in the squares of Bristol, and yet there is nothing of the vulgar tribune about him. Raised at Oxford in the Anglican faith, he is a lover of order and decorum, but he feels himself urged on wherever there are souls to be saved. We should have a very poor

understanding of the impetus given to England by this new reformation, if we did not know how accessible the English mind is to religious ideas. Subjects which the Latin mind rejects with contempt, such as predestination, election, justification by faith, the English mind reverts to incessantly, attracted by their very obscurity, by the terrors that surround them. The popular mind especially precipitates itself into the gulf of Calvinistic fatalism with a sort of sombre abandon. It loves this dreadful oscillation between the state of being lost and the state of being saved, between necessity and grace. It resembles an oarsman pulling courageously against a current that is sweeping him down to the abyss.

Methodism did not overturn the Anglican church, but it brought about its moral reformation. It was the last outburst of the true Protestant spirit. It produced no political results, because it kept itself exclusively within an ideal domain. The state, moreover, by setting the sects at liberty, had disarmed them. Yet we may feel some astonishment that the laws enacted against Dissenters and Catholics should have remained so long in force, that the Protestants, belonging to free sects, should have bowed their heads for two centuries to barbarous edicts that excluded them from every political coöperation, from the honors of the city, from the army, the magistracy, the universities. It was because they preferred remaining in the dust to seeing Catholicism emerge. Alas! It seems as though intolerance alone can overcome intolerance, as though, to borrow the biblical jargon of the sectaries, none

but Beelzebub, prince of the devils, can cast out devils. The constant dread of the Dissenters was to see the English prelacy and the monarchy become reconciled with Rome. They delivered up their humble selves to the official church, as a prey is thrown to a famished animal. Their disinterestedness and their patience proceeded from their hate. The dread of Rome was all-prevailing. The people had fashioned for itself a sort of bugaboo story out of St. Bartholomew, the assassination of Henry IV., the Gunpowder Plot, and the maxims of the casuists. Protestant loyalty had no faith in Catholic loyalty. Tillotson, preaching before the Commons, in 1678, puts the nation on its guard against a religion that is more dangerous than *irreligion*. Locke says, in his first letter upon tolerance, that a religion which teaches one not to keep his promises made to heretics is not deserving of toleration. These ideas, rooted for centuries in the English soul, hindered for a long time the emancipation of the Dissenters. They were not freed from the last of their shackles until 1828, one year before the Catholics. In order that civil equality might be established in England, Catholicism had to be rendered impotent, reduced to a shadow, almost to a mere reminiscence.

## VII.

Religious passions have apparently moderated very much in England. Sectarian spirit seems to have become weakened, and we do not see any new churches started. There are still two main religious currents: the conservative tendency and the liberal tendency, acting upon matters of faith and tinging them diversely. But people take no longer the same pleasure in theological discussions. The disputatious spirit of the nation exercises itself no longer upon them with the same furious passion. The ancient party names still exist, but rather as trophies of former battles than as actual party colors.

The official church still comprises more than half the nation. Its political privileges, its immense wealth, its powerful hierarchy, insure it the primacy. More artificial, less democratic, and also, if I may use the expression, less humane than the Catholic church, which has such a disdain for all earthly distinctions, the Anglican church does not take the trouble to compete with sects for the possession of faithful whose presence would soil her tidy temples. The voluble bishop and the rural vicar,—the client and satellite of the gentry,—bear little resemblance to apostles. They know that everything which rises in the world will come to them by a sort of natural attraction. It is not displeasing to them to form a part of the great aristocratic system. And just as family trees will lose, generation by generation, a few branches that silently

drop off, so the official religion has but a feeble hold upon those very members that are most in need of spiritual help. The spirit of the world permeates it, teaching it tolerance, informing it of the wants of the age, imparting to it a sort of charity which is rather civic than religious. Politics and religion are thus brought in close contact, they understand each other better than in any other country and help instead of combating each other.

Nothing is simple in England. Principles the most opposite are at work, not so much in mutual destruction as in separate and independent development. The Anglican church represents the union of church and state ; the Dissenters represent the separation. The Methodists, the Independents or Congregationalists, the Baptists, the Unitarians, together with the many religious families that belong to these great orders, represent the democratic church as opposed to the aristocratic church, which has its spiritual lords, its archbishops and bishops, its chapters, canons, and prebends, its livings,\* its tithes,† its earthly

\* There are 13,000 livings. More than half belong to the nobility or to private individuals. The Crown has only 1,144; the bishops 1,853, the rest belongs to universities or corporations. The rector has the free use, for life, of the parsonage, and grounds, and the tithes. When the rents are appropriated to a corporation, the latter designates a vicar. Laymen founding a benefice reserve to themselves the right of choosing the beneficiary. The choice is subject to the bishop's veto, but the latter rarely uses his right. A priest cannot purchase the right of presentation (advowson). But the vilest publican can obtain for money the right of presenting a priest. This right can be sold at auction. The auctioneer praises his wares : the incumbent well on in life, number of parishoners small, good hunting country, good society in the neighborhood, etc. etc.

† The revenues of the church are not known exactly. The tithes

wealth, greater than that of all the churches in Europe. The Dissenting Churches content themselves with liberty.

The Anglican church, bound so to speak to English soil, firmly welded to its institutions, has never succeeded in expanding itself, in throwing out distant branches. We can scarcely think of it as existing outside of England. In Ireland, so near to its birth-place, it could establish and maintain itself only by tyranny. Its disgraceful wealth made its weakness only the more conspicuous, until at last an English parliament itself severed the tie that bound to the national church a conqueror-church hateful to the conquered.

What could become of the Anglican church in the American colonies after they had proclaimed their independence? The Episcopalians have there to-day their own self-government. They have still their bishops but the sovereign of England has long since ceased to be the Protector of their faith. There are Anglican bishoprics in Canada, in the East Indies, in the Antilles, in Australia,

amount to about one hundred and twenty-five millions. They are generally in the form of a tithe-rent charge, slightly variable according to the price of wheat. In 1866 these tithe-rent charges, as fixed by the tithe-commissioners, amounted to one hundred millions. Of this sum twenty-five millions went to lay appropriators, (invested with the rights of a church and held only to maintain public worship in the parish), to schools, and to colleges. About sixteen millions went to clerical appropriators and their tenants. Only about sixty-two millions remain for the parish clergy. The total income of the Church has been estimated at two-hundred and fifty millions (including glebes, church places, and rights of surplice). The property of the Church is administered by an ecclesiastical commission, that pays the prelates fixed salaries. [These figures are in francs. TR.]



New Zealand, and South Africa. But if these distant dioceses are immense, the number of the faithful is very small. In these new countries, that have no historic reminiscences and where everything may be had for the effort, the free sects make readier conquests. The English race, emigrating thither, shakes off the fetters of the past as useless burdens and retains only its twofold love for civil liberty and for religious. It is at once the strength and the weakness of national churches to be bound to the soil, to that which is the cradle and the tomb of nations. National churches, by trammeling the mind with physical ties as well as spiritual, become themselves indissolubly linked up with nature and history. The spirit alone sets the bounds of free churches. The same emotion thrills the Catholic heart in every corner of the globe. The Bible is still the Bible, whether at Sydney, or at Jamaica, or at Boston. Sectarian spirit can attract as much as it separates. In its armed struggle against slavery, the only allies that America had in England were the Dissenters, men inspired by the same sentiment as the abolitionists.

Protestantism is an ever widening circle, at whose centre the little Anglican church seems to become day by day smaller and smaller. The rays of that church lose their intensity in crossing seas, oceans, immense continents, until they finally die out on the line where English supremacy ceases to be recognized. The Protestant spirit deploys its full expansive force only in Dissenting sects set free from temporal clogs. It revives wherever the Bible can be introduced and municipal law does not repress freedom of



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worship. It seeks out and creates everywhere allies for England, but not, be it carefully noted, for the old England ; for a new England, as democratic as it is free.

### CHAPTER III.

#### *The English Aristocracy, its Origin and Character.*

THE rule of a landed aristocracy that has secured itself in the possession of the soil, armed itself with legislative power, reduced the executive to the mere docile representative of its wishes, and succeeded finally in grouping around it, without violence, by continuous and invincible attraction, all the instincts of an energetic and patient race, such a rule is a moment unique in the history of the world. The power of England is like that of a bow always bent. No shocks, no rude collisions, no tyranny, but a terrible tension, bending everything before it, politics and manners, religion and laws. A sort of diffused will, that accepts every instrument as good, transmitting itself from generation to generation without distraction, without remorse, and without weakness.

It can not be denied that England's greatness has been the work of an oligarchy, patrician enough for hereditary principle to insure habits of command and rejuvenated often enough by cross-breeding and fresh stock to escape degenerating. What are the peculiar features of this oligarchy that has succeeded in making itself respected and dreaded by all Europe? We may, it seems to me, sum

them up as follows: First, its effort has been to be an aristocracy, and not a nobility. Second, it has been not so much military as political. Third, it has created and fashioned the ideal of the nation, maintaining at all times its intellectual and moral primacy. Hence its social prestige is greater even than its power and could outlive the laws that might take away that power.

### I.

The creation of such an aristocracy has not been the result of design. To get at the hidden causes, we must go back to nature herself. The sea has never hindered England from interfering in the affairs of the Continent. But since the Norman conquest, Great Britain has not been invaded. She has done her fighting abroad. She has distributed her blows over Europe, she has tried the weak spots in the armor, now of France, now of Spain, now of Holland. Her irregular and unexpected blows have more than once turned the scales. Her great military leaders, Marlborough, Clive, Wellington, have always come, so to speak, in the nick of time; England is like an attentive looker-on, who knows how to join in a fracas. Still, her nobility and her people have not been condemned to perpetual warfare. She takes a sort of pride in being caught unprepared and gaining everything, the first danger over, by means of her savage tenacity and cool daring. She has not conquered her provinces piecemeal. Her national unity has always been assured to her. She has never been under

the necessity of trying to find herself. How many other nations, on the contrary, have had to struggle for centuries not to live but merely to be born and to get their name! Hence the profession of arms has never been considered in England as the only one suitable for a gentleman. The army was for a long time only a sort of royal guard. Even at this day it is the king's (queen's) army. The sovereign can, if he sees fit, depose a general officer.\* Nevertheless the jealousy of parliament has prevented the army from becoming an instrument of enslavement. The officers, for the most part younger sons of the nobility, are thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the governing classes. The aristocracy has infused its spirit into the army, and remained its master, in anything but danger of being subjugated by it. The navy is indeed the property of the nation, is called the "British navy." It is the real defence of an isolated country, the most daring and the most terrible instrument of its power. But what has always been the highest reward for men of the army and the navy? To be received into the number of hereditary legislators.

The peculiar genius of the last conquerors will explain to us why England has always remained warlike without being ever really military. If the Normans loved battle, they also loved booty. In Normandy, Italy, Sicily or England, everywhere we see them the same, jealous of

\* It was by means of a royal *warrant* that the purchase and sale of commissions in the army was abolished, July 26, 1871, by the Gladstone ministry. The house of Lords had tried to defer the reform, and Gladstone, not able to carry it by parliamentary measures, accomplished it by making use of the royal prerogative.

"gain," fond of land. During the crusades they are ready to forget the Holy Land and the sepulchre of Christ. Celtic and Latin folly does not entice these cold intellects away to the land of chimera and imagination. This northern race, tempered by cold, material, greedy, somewhat coarse-grained, is not apt to drop the substance for the shadow. The Christian conquerors of Sicily have no fanaticism, they do not persecute the Mussulman, they rather enjoy the harems of the emirs. They blend Arabian and Gothic architecture at Monreale, in the Palatine chapel. England never needed a Cervantes. With the fifteenth century chivalry fell into ridicule. The feudal wars were not waged for ideas; they were agrarian wars. Death was not a sufficient penalty for revolt, so confiscation of property was superimposed. To whom did men pledge themselves? To those who had given them fiefs. Men did not fight for remote interests, for words and symbols. They fought for things concrete, for fields, woods, the spoil of the vanquished.

The Norman *compagnons*, lucky adventurers, fond of the chase and out-door life, had all England for a hunting-park. Feudal ties held the conquerors for a long time attached to France; there was here an admirable and almost boundless domain ever open. England was for some time only a province. When France rose against those whom it called strangers, when it felt awakening within it the dim consciousness of being a nation, this heritage had to be abandoned. Then the struggle in England became more terrible. The War of the Roses

succeeded the Hundred Years' War. It was in reality a long contest for the possession of the soil. Conquerors and conquered were mixed up on both sides in the civil broils. These desperate quarrels attached the Norman aristocracy definitively to the island, which became its sole possession and its source of wealth. Saxon and Norman had henceforth one and the same destiny, shared in the same aspirations. If England still waged war in Europe, it did so less with a view to making conquests than to securing its own independence. It sought for some time to come to hold a few positions, some *têtes-de-pont*, as it were, on the Continent. But isolated, narrowed down to its island, the aristocracy of the conquerors becomes more and more alienated from Europe. In this remote land, the feudal system, escaping from the influences of the Holy Roman Empire, Italy, and the written law, expands, develops, transforms itself with the utmost freedom, influenced only by time, and those obscure instincts which constitute what we call national will.

The real sovereignty belongs, in every country, to those who have the wealth, the capital; and in barbarian times almost the only capital is land. The Norman Conquest was the dispossession of an entire people. As long as there was no other source of wealth in England than land, the territorial aristocracy were the exclusive masters of the country. The barbarian mind is not satisfied with an empire of the imagination, an ideal and nebulous royalty. It loves the evidences and the fruits of power. And what earthly sovereignty can be more complete than that which

consists in the possession of the soil? Recognize everywhere in the masters of the soil the masters of a country. In modern times, commerce, industry, machinery have created new wealth. Immense capital thus accumulated, having for its ministering servants the shrewdest and most eager intellects and a host of workmen of flesh and blood and slaves of iron, has demanded its lawful share in the government. But landed wealth still remains the wealth *par excellence*. The gentleman who lives on his hereditary estates, surrounded by clients and docile servants, is the veritable king. He is the judge, he is the arbiter, he is the master. Everything belongs to him, the beasts of the forest, the birds, the air, the wind, the rain; it is for him that the sap rises in the spring-time. He is not a creation of to-day. He does not lead a restless life hither and thither. He is borne along by the gentle movement of things that have no beginning and no end. He lives slowly, without fatigue and without fear. He is not so much an individual as the representative of a race. We salute in him royalty, rather than the king. We cannot imagine to ourselves a more perfect and complete possession, guaranteed as it is by law, by esteem, by common consent. Who can conceive—that has not experienced them—the delights of such a possession, free from everything precarious, this peculiar condition of a soul that feels itself in harmony with the eternal laws of nature? For man, are not three successive generations almost an eternity of time? Here, the three ages can meet. The cradle is side by side with the tomb. The dream of life enacts itself upon the same



scene, the actors have their exits and their entrances, all playing the same part.

Why flee this dream, the most real of all earthly dreams? What is there preferable to it? It enters the very soul through the mute beauty of the trees and flowers, through the familiar lines of the horizon, through the undulations, every turn of which is well known, and calls up some association. Does man really possess anything, if he has not a few feet of ground that he can call his own? Upon this favored soil, become the wife as it were of the family, is showered everything. It is dressed and adorned in a thousand ways, it is drained, one never grows weary of embellishing it and making it more fertile. All wealth proceeds from it, and all wealth returns to it. With its harvests there springs up also independence, that dearest possession of lofty souls; it is a sturdy and peaceful independence, knowing neither doubt nor fear. Beneath this soft sky, gazing on an horizon ever dimmed by delicate haze, the lulled spirit does not crave eager sensations. It has no need of the transports of ambition, it disdains the servile and shaming elegancies of the court, it preserves a sort of savage virginity. The chase, the ponderous vapors of solid repasts and semi-intoxication full of vague reveries, loves almost animal, the cares of a semi-patriarchal administration, the duties of hospitality at once simple and sumptuous, suffice to fill out a life self-restricted to a narrow sphere.

Land was scarce in Venice. Its aristocracy, one of traders, expended its wealth in feasts, in palaces, pictures,

and statues. The English merchants, a thousand times richer than the Venetian, have never tried to rival the landed aristocracy with a new aristocracy. Bourgeois wealth, imprisoned within mansions of stone, vainly sets its wits to work to create new enchantments. It adorns its habitations, makes life comfortable and easy, perhaps too easy and too uniform. Thick carpets deaden the footfall, a thousand nothings, at first superfluous, become indispensable. But high art rarely lights up with its rays these artificial lives, this domestic pomp, this humdrum luxury and timid ostentation which constitute the atmosphere of city wealth. Hence great wealth flees the city and considers itself safe only when it is consolidated into some huge domain. Personal wealth always feels itself weak by the side of landed wealth. It views with envious eye antique castles guarded by the ages, donjons adorned by centenary ivy. Here may be read the entire history of England. Pevensey, occupied by William after the landing of his army, is still standing and belongs to the Cavendish family. The companions of William covered the country with castles. One century after the invasion there were over a thousand of them. Monuments of servitude, they have since become places of refuge for liberty. The English aristocracy, then, has this characteristic, that it is not a military or a trading but a landed aristocracy. It has administered the country as a large estate is managed. Kings and ministers, even the greatest of them, have been its superintendents, public functionaries its tenants, armies its watch-dogs and shepherds.

It will be necessary, however, to point out how the aristocracy has succeeded in keeping its territorial power and defending it from attack. English soil belongs to England, a sort of immortal legal person whose actual and shifting representative is the king. This latter is nominally the supreme lord, the tenant in capite, which means that the English nation has never relinquished a sort of right to the absolute ownership and undivided sovereignty of the territory of Great Britain. A foreigner can enjoy the liberties of the English constitution, but English soil is withheld from him.\* The Englishman himself has scarcely any conception of the personal, undivided, absolute right of property as defined by the Roman law. The ancient Saxon law, barbarian in its nature and founded on custom, always resisted the law brought from Italy to Oxford by the Norman abbots. The clerks, as agents of Rome, contended for the Roman law. The Saxon owners—such of them as had been spared by the conquest—and the Norman nobles contended for the ancient customs, which restricted land to a race and did not recognize any individual right of property.

To understand English legislation, one must rid his mind of all Latin notions. The conception of a thing as being in one's exclusive and complete possession, for use and abuse, can not be applied to English soil. No one has absolute power over the land. The freest estate is a fief of the sovereign. All the feudal links have been destroyed ; but the last one of all, the king, has remained.

\* At least until 1871.

This general servitude of the soil, purely nominal, it is true, still denotes that individualism owes something to the community, the citizen to his country, that the land does not belong to those who produce the crops, and that the community still exercises over it some sort of indefinable and inalienable right. What we should call at the present day the State possesses a kind of sovereignty that is not merely ideal but material and tangible. The woods, the fields, the grain pay it homage.

If the land is not free, the same may be said of the possession of it. On attempting to analyze the law, we shall see not only that there are different qualities inherent in the land but also peculiar ways of holding it, and different grades as it were of ownership. We must discriminate between: First, freehold estates and estates less than freehold. Second, estates in possession and estates in expectancy, which are forms more or less limited of absolute property. To understand the first point, it will be necessary to go back to the Conquest. The Conqueror had rewarded his companions by ceding to them portions of his immense royal domain. He created military benefices, which gradually became hereditary. The great vassals imitated the sovereign and ceded portions of their territory by the process of subinfeudation. The allodial proprietors, that is, the Saxons who had not been despoiled, put themselves under feudal laws in order to be better protected. Thus the feudal system soon overran all England, establishing four different kinds of tenures, and the lands were thus classified under four categories, according

to the nature of the services rendered by the tenant to the one of whom he held. First, if the service was military and noble (*servitium militare*), the fief was equivalent to our *fief d'haubert*. Second, there were lands held by *free socage*, where the tenant, although still a freeman, owed non-military services. Third, tenure by *pure villenage*. Fourth, tenure by *privileged villenage*. These four tenures were gradually reduced to three. First, *military tenure* or knight service. Second, *free socage*. Third, tenure by villenage was transformed into the holding which has acquired the name of *copyhold*.

Until the end of the seventeenth century, the great part of English land was occupied by tenants of the first class. At first the possessor of the fief owed at least forty days of service a year. The estate was not free, but passed by right to the heir, who was the eldest son if there was more than one. During minority, the lord of the fee was the legal guardian, kept the land, and disposed of the revenues without having to render account, could dispose of the vassal in marriage or compel the purchase of his consent, had a claim to ransom when a prisoner, a gift when his eldest son put on spurs or his eldest daughter was married, aids, reliefs, fines, escheats, etc. After reaching his majority, the tenant could alienate the land, but the lord lost none of his rights as regarded the new possessor. Military services were gradually converted into assessments. From the time of Henry II., people began to pay *escuage*. When the king made war, he levied an assessment upon all the proprietors. King John, however,

pledged himself in Magna Charta not to demand *escuage* without the consent of parliament. All these feudal burdens, so oppressive and so numerous, that had fastened themselves like a leprosy upon tenure by knight-service were not definitively abolished until the restoration, when Charles II. sought to recompense the cavaliers who had remained faithful to the royal cause. The act which abolished military tenure and its consequences deserves certainly as important a place as Magna Charta in the history of England.

There remained then only free-socage and villenage. The free-socage estate has become the modern *freehold*. Military services were, from the very nature of the contract of knighthood, indeterminate. The tenure by free socage, less noble, was in reality more fortunate, more akin to true property. It was burdened only with fixed services, days of work due to the lord, rents payable in money or in kind. During a minority, the wardship did not belong to the lord but to the relatives of the minor. Hence marriage was less under restraint. At the present day, almost all the land in England is held by freehold tenure. The feudal services have been abolished. The freehold estate is still attached by an ideal bond to the lord *par excellence*, the sovereign, but it is subject only to an impost, and no longer owes anything to an intermediate suzerain.

Side by side with these freehold estates are the *copyhold* lands. To understand aright this form of tenure, we must picture to ourselves what is called a *manor*. A high baron, lord of the manor, kept for himself his own estate,



a sort of private property, and distributed the rest among his vassals, his *free* tenants. But this private estate being often too large to be utilized by the lord himself alone, he reserved only a part of it, distributing a second part to his *villains*, while a third part, uncultivated, served for road way and pasturage for the lord and his tenants. The villains, dwelling in villages, held their lands by the good will of the lord. At first they could be dispossessed. They rendered the most menial services ; they belonged to the land, and not the land to them. But gradually their tenure became consolidated and depended less upon caprice. Prescription gave it a sort of fixity. Every lord of a manor had his court. The custom of this court was the protection of the villains, they became tenants by virtue of the roll, or copy of the roll, of this court, whence the expression, *copyholders*. Villenage lasted until the reign of James I. The villains themselves, as persons, became free, but the statute of Charles II., which liberated *free* holders from feudal services, maintained the existence of copyhold tenure. The descendants of villains, although owners as matter of fact, still held their lands only by compliance with the custom of the manor.

At the present day, the obligations imposed by this form of tenure are reduced to a minimum. Still, some of them do remain. Generally the rules of transmission are the same as for freehold estates, but occasionally there are exceptions. The lord of the manor still retains a sort of right of superior ownership. This right extends, for instance, to mines, whatever is under the soil, even to trees



planted by the tenant. The latter cannot make a lease for more than one year without the consent of the lord. In reality, the tenant has only a right of occupation founded upon custom. Each new tenant, whether by inheritance or by purchase, pays to the lord a fine for the change. Each manor has its own custom with regard to rents, reliefs, etc. There are some manors where the lord has a right to seize, at the death of the tenant, his best animal (heriot).

Parliament has permitted and even facilitated as much as possible the complete enfranchisement of ancient villenage tenures. The rights of the lord can be bought off either at the lord's or the tenant's option. The proportion of copyhold estates to freeholds, then, must be continually diminishing, since no new ones can be created, the very essence of the tenure being custom and a relic of ancient servitude. We can thus foresee the moment when all English lands will have the same legal quality, so to speak. But, after having spoken of estates of freehold and less than freehold, we must take up estates in possession and estates in expectancy, for there are not only lands of two classes, but there are also different ways of possessing one and the same land.

Feudal ownership was in reality nothing but an *usus fructus*. But the nobility did not rest satisfied long with such a precarious tenure, which aggrandized the suzerain at the expense of the tenant. Their instinctive efforts were directed towards establishing hereditary property, replacing feudal ties by family ties. The *fief taillé*, *feudum talliatum*, estate-in-tail, was established to this intent. It created a

sort of property appertaining to the family. Each successive possessor, the wearer of a great name, guarded it as a deposit, and the law, by surrounding it by safeguards and restrictions, protected it against the caprices and whims of the individual. The will of each generation found itself imprisoned, as it were, between the will of the generations preceding and the rights of the generations to come. Such estates were placed under the watch and guardianship of the dead. The famous act entitled *de donis conditionalibus*, passed in the reign of Edward I., was a victory of the aristocracy over royalty. It consolidated the tenures of great families by giving predominant authority to the wish and intentions of the founder of the estate. This wish must be complied with *secundum formam in carta doni expressam*. That is to say, whatever transfers might be made, the estate should always devolve upon the heirs of the body of him who had received the fee, or, in case there were none, should revert to the heirs of the donor. The rights of inheritance and reversion were thus absolute, fixed, independent of every transfer, every lease, every arrangement made by the possessor of the estate. This statute gave the family a firm seat, attached the aristocracy to the soil. But the inconveniences of the measure were not slow in manifesting themselves. Farmers were dispossessed of their farms, because leases made with the tenant-in-tail were not considered as binding beyond the life of the lessor. Otherwise it would have been easy, by means of long leases, to defeat the heirs-in-tail. Creditors had no longer any security for recovering their debts. The stat-

ute *de donis* facilitated also rebellion ; for an estate-in-tail could not be confiscated, but only sequestrated during the life of the tenant condemned for high treason.

A shrewd king eluded the law which had conferred exorbitant power upon the landed nobility. He permitted sham suits to be instituted between the representatives of the donor and the donee, by means of which an estate-in-tail might be converted into an estate in fee-simple. This operation was called barring the entail. It put an end to all the rights of succession and reversion. The immunity of entailed estates from confiscation was also destroyed in the reign of Edward IV., who took it away from the nobility and thereby rendered revolt less easy. In the reign of Henry VIII. a second method of fictitious procedure was invented, which facilitated the alienation of estates by permitting the possessor in certain cases to despoil his heirs or the heirs of the donor of the privileges given them by the statute *de donis*. Still later, the crown laid hands upon entailed estates for the recovery of debts due to it, and finally, at the present day the law permits all the creditors to sell the property of a debtor in bankruptcy.

The old fictitious procedures for liberating entailed estates are no longer followed. The tenant can acquire full property, can free himself completely, by a simple act registered in the proper way. This power, however, is rarely without some qualifications. The manner in which the family protects itself against the individual is this. A man of wealth wishing to fix his name to an estate, a father marrying off his son, does not ordinarily deed away

the property. He makes what is called a settlement. By the terms of this settlement the son gets a life-estate, the grandson a remainder-in-tail. The son has the enjoyment of the *usus fructus*. On attaining his majority, the grandson may, with the consent of his father, (or any person whom the first donor has designated as *protector* of the estate), break the entail and reënter into full ownership with all the rights thereunto pertaining. But ordinarily this liberty is made use of only to make a new settlement, with estate for life, remainder-in-tail, which may be enfranchised in turn, and so on. There is thus a periodic succession of estates in possession. The chain that links the generations together is not perfectly rigid, but it binds strongly enough to prevent the land from slipping too rapidly and readily from a single hand.

I have described the custom. It is the offspring of ancient rights. The union of family and land is still so close that the land is no sooner free than it seeks of its own accord fresh servitudes. This periodic enfranchisement itself would perhaps not be carried out but for heavy charges which the estate has to meet, such as the pensions of widows, sums to be paid to daughters and younger sons. A partial alienation becomes necessary from time to time, but it can be effected only when the estate has become for a moment perfectly free. It has been estimated that these charges use up an estate in about three generations, if there are no outside revenues, that is to say, if marriages, salaries, commercial profits, and speculations do not supply the family with fresh capital.

The law is at the present time less conservative than custom. It favors alienation of the soil. There is no longer any legal way of consolidating an estate (i. e. suspending ownership) for a longer term than a life in being with a supplementary period of twenty-one years. An estate cannot be limited to the children of a person not in being at the time. An estate can be limited only to persons in being and the children of such. No amount of generosity, no amount of foresight, can tie up property for two generations not in being. The right of disposing of property by will is complete as soon as one is possessed of property free from entail. Still, we have seen how custom gives freedom to the estate only to take it away again. A single wish is no longer binding on all generations for centuries ; nevertheless this wish descends, so to speak, from generation to generation, renews itself, revives, and binds together successive generations. The right of primogeniture, introduced into England by the Normans, has become so profoundly a matter of habit that it is rarely belied by the freedom of testamentary dispositions. When an owner dies intestate, the law gives the entire state to the eldest son. But this is a very rare case. The practice of making wills is universal. Paternal dispositions, far more than the law, consecrate the privilege of primogeniture. Landed property is the visible sign of power, the most stable and most coveted form of wealth, the one most clothed in respect, associations and prestige. The family clings to it as the ivy clings to the wall. The younger sons, damaged in their material interests, console

their imaginations with the growing greatness of their name and the sacrifice that they make to the family. They are not heard to complain. In youth, they are too generous ; in age, too proud. A sort of equality with what is greatest consoles them for inequality of fortune. For the nation, the right of primogeniture is the force that tears young men away from easy idleness, drives them out of the country, sends them off to distant colonies, forces them into activity. Hence labor remains something dignified. It is not altogether necessary, as in other countries, that to be a man of the world one must be a nobody. One of the things that surprises a foreigner is to see that the right of primogeniture, which formerly had its enemies in England, no longer has any, at least, any professed enemies. By force of law and custom, landed property has acquired in England a solidity which it does not possess perhaps in any other part of the civilized world. So far from becoming subdivided, it is concentrating itself in fewer and fewer hands.

The laws of Henry VIII. were aimed at those who contrived to diminish the share of the people ; they defended the poor man. They fixed a limit for the number of sheep on certain lands, in order that pasturages might not be multiplied. They contended against the mercantile spirit, that wished to treat English soil as its prey and extract from it the greatest profits. Parliament seeing the Isle of Wight becoming depopulated—a portion of the realm so much exposed to attacks from France—prohibited large farms there (under Henry VII.). This prohibition was



extended subsequently to the whole realm. "No one shall take more than one farm, when the revenue exceeds ten marks." The small farms were restored, the plough set to work once more upon lands given up to troops of sheep. "Your shepe, says Sir Thomas More, in his Utopia, "that were wont to be so meke and tame, and so small eaters, now, as I heare saye, be become so great devowerers and so wylde, that they eate up, and swallow downe the very men themselves. They consume, destroye, and devoure whole fields, howses, and cities. For looke in what partes of the realme doth growe the fynest, and therfore dearest woll, there noble men, and gentlemen: yea, and certeyn Abbattes, holy men no doubt, not contenting them selves with the yearely revenues and profytes, that were wont to grow to theyr fore fathers, nor beyng content that they live in rest and pleasure nothinge profiting, yea much noyinge the weal publique: leave no ground for tillage, thei inclose al into pastures: thei throw downe houses: they plucke downe townes, and leave nothing standynge, but only the church to be a shepehowse."\*

England was not yet the land of political economy, nor was division of labor understood. To-day the *yeoman*, the free man cultivating his own land, has almost disappeared. Yet those free tenants were the soldiers of the English revolution. The *Ironsides*, Cromwell's regiment, was made up of country squires mounted on their own horses. The petition in favor of Hampden was brought to parliament by a troop of mounted gentlemen of Buckinghamshire

\* Requoted from the Arber Reprint. TR.



numbering some say two, others six thousand. In the seventeenth century, England had a mass of small land-owners living on their estates, free men ready to fight for their liberty. These laborers were the nerve and sinew of the liberal protestant movement. At the present day, they have been dispossessed by the large owners. There is nothing to check this incessant absorption. The great fortunes made in banking or trading always consolidate themselves in real estate. Is it asking too little of the soil to be satisfied with returns of two, or two and a half per cent? The soil is not so avaricious. It yields other and inestimable profits, in the shape of public consideration, parity with all that is most respected, local influence, authority, judicial functions, political power. Dingy offices of the city, mines dug down into the bowels of the earth, docks that gather in the products of the world, reeking factories, the thousand ships that plough the sea, everything pays tribute to old English soil. What feats of activity it has cost to perfect so many noble country-seats, where, within the calm of the grand parks, all activity seems extinct. These oases of peace, this dense turf where the step of man dies away, these solemn trees that fear nothing from time, are the final metamorphosis of human energy. In the silent solitude of Blenheim I hear the cries of the battle-field. The motionless and melancholy softness of so many beautiful places is a veil through which the imagination can trace the stirring phantoms of the past, the struggling of eloquence, the torments of speculation, the efforts of labor, the sufferings of whole generations.

The price of land is still rising, and the demand is always in excess of the supply, notwithstanding the incessant emigration to all parts of the world. Wealth is always trying to round off its estates, and agriculture on the grand scale, now a pure matter of business, tends to enlarge the farms so as to diminish the general expenses. The result is that the number of farmers diminishes as well as the number of owners.

The rural population is divided into three classes : owners, farmers, hired laborers. In no other country is this division so thorough and so exclusive. Good or bad, the system has a right to the name of English. At first sight it strikes us as something artificial, for it separates three things, the land, the instruments of labor, the arm, things, nevertheless, which are intimately connected and which supplement one another. Still, it answers as a sort of ideal to economists and they offer it without hesitation as a model. They believe it to be more favorable than any other to large returns ; it puts agriculture on a level with manufactures.

The taxes upon land are light. The law, made thus far by owners, has always dealt kindly with it. Down to recent times the law showed a marked preference for large holdings. For estates exceeding one hundred thousand pounds, the tax on transfers was fixed and not in the ratio of the value. Since 1850, however, it has been adjusted to that ratio. Parliament has fixed it at ten shillings on one hundred pounds, or one half per cent. Property, then,

loses almost nothing by changing hands. The taxes on inheritances are as follows :

For the son, daughter or other descendant in direct line . . . . .	1 per cent.
For brother, sister, and their descendants . . . . .	5 " "
For the brother, sister of the father, mother, and their descendants . . . . .	5 " "
For the brother or sisters of grandfather or grandmother . . . . .	6 " "
For any other grade, or persons not relatives . . . . .	10 " "

## II.

The English aristocracy is founded, then, upon wealth. Its power is not merely, like that of nobilities strictly so called, a power existing by and in the imagination. What gives it strength is property, and of all forms of property the one most vigorous, the one least easily shaken ; not empty names, fictions, symbols. Beneath the ideal appearance there is a firm resisting texture. The barbarian spirit has always respected strength, possession, success ; it has regarded property as the true guaranty of liberty. Can he be free who has to hold out his hand ? How does it come that the Anglican church feels itself independent of individuals, local administration, state agents ? Because it has property. Its estates are under the protection of the state, we may even say in the discretion of the state, but it does not receive a salary, strictly speaking. Why are the dissenting churches independent ? Because they possess

houses, churches, revenues. We can say the same of the universities, schools, corporations, associations of all kinds. The House of Lords may be considered as proprietary for the aggregate of domains attached to the peerage is a sort of treasure belonging to it. Without the right of property, there is no lasting independence.

Protestantism also has had its share in attaching the English race to the possession of earthly goods. England was the first of European nations to recognize the power of money, the first to have sound finances. Political economy, the science of wealth, has found here its Promised Land. Catholicism had made of poverty a virtue and pointed to heaven as the only conquest worthy of human ambition. It gave up the earth to religious orders, who let it lie barren. Poverty is still in Latin countries almost a sign of sanctity, an earthly grace. The narrow path that leads to heaven can have only stones and thorns. What are the brief joys of life, its ephemeral triumphs, by the side of the infinite delights, the boundless consolations of faith that forgets itself in obedience and plunges as it were into the depths of hope, and pardon, and heavenly riches? Faith dulls the springs of vulgar ambition, extracts the sting of covetousness, chills the instincts of the animal man. When a Catholic country begins to worship wealth, this is a sign that it is approaching its decline.

Quite different was the spirit of the Reformation. Protestantism is the religion of effort, and he who is capable of effort of thought readily becomes capable of all material efforts. By giving conscience its freedom, prot-

estantism gave it also a taste for struggle. It said to man Think, act. Hostile to weakness, idleness, self-abnegation, protestantism thrusts man out into life, not as a victim but as a combatant. The kingdom of Christ must be established here below, a doctrine must not be tardy in bearing its fruits. The best men, those who are in possession of the truth, the saints, must also be the strongest, the most capable, the most fortunate,—let us not mince words the richest. Poverty is only a sign of sloth. The acquisition of wealth betokens effort, the victory of man over his passions ; it is the consequence of economy, order, life according to rule. Religious societies that are the offspring of liberty have a love of order that borders on tyranny and that astonishes Latin carelessness. This apparent contradiction has manifested itself at Geneva, in Scotland, England, Northern Germany, the United States. As soon as man constructs his faith for himself, he becomes more hardy in all his enterprises. Will always follows power and power will.

England soon ceased, then, to despise wealth. It was not regarded as a danger but a protection. People persuaded themselves that liberty could not do without riches. The English aristocracy is not guided by any profound political calculation in assimilating to itself all the great fortunes and attracting all the marked talents. It only follows an untouched and ingenuous barbarian instinct. Confronted by some new force, it seeks not to destroy but to get possession of it. It is naïvely fond of success. The Anglo-Saxon spirit is a loadstone always turning the

positive pole towards power, fortune, success, and even chance. It exalts whatever is rising, strengthens whatever is strong ; it does not idly contradict fate. It surrounds its favorites with a halo of unqualified admiration, deifies its heroes, never sees any spots in its sun. It has less of envy and at the same time less of generosity than the Latin spirit. This latter comforts weakness with pity and wounds greatness with irony. Its vanity gives the lie to facts, annuls and insults them. A certain sly perversity estranges it from causes too victorious and triumphs too complete. A certain nobility of mind attracts it to illusive, imaginary grandeurs, chimeras whose shattered fragments are borne away by relentless time. England does not like to overthrow its idols, she displays them before mankind and tries to make them seem even greater. She takes everything in a matter-of-fact way and does not have to make the least effort to admire what is fortunate and strong.

In France, men pay court only to whatever is more powerful ; in England, they pay court to everything that is powerful. Whatever rises above the middle classes is immediately absorbed by the aristocracy. Hence the latter is constantly becoming rejuvenated, a little of the Anglo-Saxon blood is being continually mingled with the Norman. The aristocracy is like a forest, where the trunks lose their dead limbs and bring forth each year new branches. A nobleman's daughter is not degraded by marrying a man without a title. Within the same family, some members have a title which confers political privi-



leges, others a simple title of courtesy, others again no title at all, no prefix to the name. New men wear ancient titles, very old families are without title. Rank is sought after, but wealth still more. Nobility a-begging is something not understood. The delights of the imagination are of little value, detached from the pleasures and advantages conferred by wealth. There are patricians but there is no patrician race. The grand English lord does not resemble the Spanish grandee, in whose veins there no longer flows anything but a slender thread of "blue blood," any more than he resembles the ennobled valets of an absolute government, ante-chamber generals, boudoir favorites, a sordid, mendicant, venal tribe.

Not everybody can become a nobleman in England; only to the rich is it possible. But, then, every one can hope to become rich. If wealth does not always lead to honor, at all events it is the surest road. The possession of a certain number of unencumbered acres seems to every Englishman the most natural title to the peerage. The peers nominated by Lord Palmerston, the Earl of Derby, or Mr. Gladstone, like those of Mr. Pitt, are large land-owners. The union of aristocracy and wealth has become even more intimate in our days. However noble one may be, one must be rich. Railroads, commerce, industry, produce too many fortunate parvenus, who must be coped with. Could one have read fifty years ago in a newspaper this paragraph: "The Earl of L. having been raised to the Scottish representative peerage, retires from the banking-house of M. M.; he is succeeded by his son, Lord K. . ." (1866)? To-day

the sons of dukes become bankers, engineers, and merchants.

The aristocracy finds that it is no longer rich enough. Nepotism is no longer so shameless, so scandalous as in times past, although birth is still the best qualification for the army, the navy, the church, all government offices. But wealth is the only road that leads to power. The millionaire steps from his counting-house into parliament. When he has made his fortune, he can aspire to the honor of representing his country. He consults the election agents. What are you ready to pay? is the first thing asked. With open hands he comes to some borough or county and scatters money broadcast. He is bled in a thousand ways, for charitable purposes, church repairs etc., etc. There are some deputies who expend several thousand pounds in getting elected, and who continued to pay a sort of annual tax of one or two thousand. Is that too much, if they only succeed in working themselves into the aristocratic penumbra, introducing themselves and families into the old families of the county and the whirlpool of the capital?

It does not take long to discover that the mantle of old nobility covers at the present day a plutocracy. One who has no fortune cannot make pretensions to any thing, either to social esteem or to distinction. People refuse to believe in merit that does not know how to obtain anything for itself. Without fortune, Robert Peel, Gladstone, Disraeli, Bright, might have wandered all their lives outside of parliament. Formerly the "rotten boroughs"

were a sort of political canonicate, that a great lord could give to a poor relative or sell to a rich one. The Reform Act suppressed them. Robert Peel was the son of a cotton-spinner who died in 1830, leaving him a fortune of sixty millions.\* This fortune placed him on a par with the aristocracy. At the age of twenty-one, in 1809, he bought a "rotten borough" that had twelve electors. English society is hermetically closed to poverty. Is it surprising that life should be for almost every one a struggle and a battle? We see everywhere intense effort. Strange sight for a disinterested spectator. So many efforts to attain often such petty ends, the sense of duty dragged into things artificial and seemingly superfluous, lives wasted merely in keeping up appearances, virtue, talent, genius itself, subjected to inexorable social tyranny. On the other hand, an activity that never wearies and is never checked, forever turning over material things as well as ideas, a strength that seeks rather than shuns obstacles, and finally these splendid works whose grandeur makes us forget the wretchedness and suffering of the workmen.

The more the vague boundary line separating the aristocracy from an opulent bourgeoisie becomes effaced, the more eager becomes social covetousness. To be and to seem seek one another out, approach one another, espouse one another. The astonishing feature in a land of privileges is not the admiration that the rich feel for the aristocracy, but rather the naïve respect which the aristocracy feels for wealth and which it does not seek to dissimulate.

\* Francs. TR.

This feeling comes from the coarse good sense of the race. It respects money because it knows that money is a force, a reality. Who shall say that a million is a chimera, a fictitious value, a thing to be despised? The imagination sees at a glance what the word contains, mansions, fields, luxury, authority, perhaps the peerage itself, that is to say, the hereditary right to govern men.

Capital, which seems as a bond of union between aristocracy and bourgeoisie, is growing with extraordinary rapidity. In 1842 the tax-paying income of the country (the income derived from houses, lands, railroad property, commerce, manufacturing stocks, professional gains, private enterprises) was three milliards nine hundred millions. In 1862 the taxable income was five and a half milliards. From 1842 to 1852, a period of ten years, the taxable income had increased six per cent. During the next ten years, from 1852 to 1862 it had increased twenty per cent. In 1868 the taxable income exceeded ten milliards (in francs. Tr). What an expansion of capital! The class which has it in keeping becomes every day more numerous and more ambitious. Everything is shifting, and growing, and undergoing transformation. The tide of the middle classes rises higher and higher. To take away from these souls bent upon wealth the prospect of things tangibly and conspicuously great would be to deprive them of life.

England was the first to recognize the power of capital. She succeeded in 1750 in reducing the rate of interest to three per cent. She has not kept her capital locked up with greedy hand in things immovable, she has given it wings,

has gone in search of adventure, has taken risks. She has aspired in her calculations to the conquest of the universe. Side by side with the visible and resplendent aristocracy, masters of the soil and of popular opinion, there has gradually arisen another, humble at first and overlooked, hiding away in dingy counting-rooms and behind big ledgers or the brick walls of factories. Within the dull and restricted plain of bourgeois life, during its sombre and taciturn days, the soul is enkindled by visions of nobility luxury, power. The bourgeoisie keeps its eyes fixed upon the aristocracy. The aristocracy is in search of wealth. It serves as its patron and support, protects it. "Other nations have subordinated commercial interests to political ; she (England) has always subordinated her political interests to her commercial."\* Commerce, like a cupping-glass, must draw to the English heart the blood of the entire world.

In the seventeenth century a man was extremely rich on twenty thousand pounds a year. This was the income of the three wealthiest dukes, Ormond, Buckingham, Albemarle. The average income for a peer was three thousand, for a member of the House of Commons eight hundred. Ministers did not shrink from any means of swelling their salaries. Parliamentary corruption was unblushing. Chancellors, Lords of the Treasury, Lords Lieutenant of Ireland accumulated rapid fortunes. Titles, positions, commissions, everything was for sale. Under James II., Sunderland, president of the council, received from Louis

\* Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, Book xx. chap. 7.



XIV. a pension of eight thousand pounds. Tyrconnel sent him from Ireland enormous sums, and the king loaded him with gifts. To-day, there are obscure bourgeois, whose names are never heard outside of the city or the chief ports and manufacturing districts, yet who are as rich as, richer than, the descendants of the old families. Still, there is no hostility between hereditary wealth and parvenu wealth. The class of nobles expands in proportion to public wealth. Pitt alone created one hundred and forty peers. He had too much contempt for honors not to be lavish with them. In his opinion, the peerage was just the thing for great wealth: it was only an additional vanity. To-day, there are not less than four hundred and sixty peers entitled to seats in the Upper House, and there is no constitutional limit to the number. By marriages and alliances the aristocracy is continually absorbing the wealth produced by labor. The third estate, not feeling itself separated from the nobility by any insurmountable barrier, has no hatred for it. Noblemen not of the peerage are mixed up with the third estate. Parliament has long been the assemblage of a mixed order, composed of noblemen and merchants. Financiers, lawyers, merchants find themselves mixed up with men bearing the most ancient names. The third estate has not become, as in France, the enemy of the aristocracy. For, as the aristocracy has become more democratic than in our country, so the democracy has become more aristocratic.

There is no open contest, as yet, in England between aristocracy and democracy. The history of the country is



filled with the struggles between aristocracy and royalty. The triumph of the aristocracy was lasting and glorious only because it was a victory over tyranny. Under the first two Georges, the Whigs defended the rights of the House of Hanover. These defenders are in reality its masters. Under George III., the Tories regain some influence, but only at the price of giving up their fidelity to a cause detested by the people. The recollection of the grand struggles against political and religious despotism serves the aristocracy as an aureole, and the nation watches, as from afar, this duel between parties who quarrel over power, offices, dignities, and patronage. It is satisfied with seeing royalty separated from Rome and obedient to parliament. It cares little whether the one party demands all these things as of right, or the other party purchases them by a trifle more deference to royalty. This deference is no longer anything more than courtesy. The great Whig families, born in the purple, transmit to one another political power as a heritage. They force upon the king ministers whom he detests.

There is already an English people, but this people has only simple, elemental passions, hatred of absolute power, horror of Rome, jealous patriotism. As long as these passions are satisfied, it demands nothing further. It does not meddle with the political drama. The Whigs became the enemies of a royalty opposed to their pretensions, they became the champions of parliamentary supremacy. Still, their ministries, like those of the Tories, are patrician ministries. In Lord North's ministry there were only peers

and the elder sons of peers. North, the eldest son of an earl, was almost alone in the House of Commons. Pitt, who succeeded the coalition-ministry, was also alone in the lower house ; all his colleagues were peers. The Addington ministry, that took his place, comprised five peers and four elder sons. In Pitt's second ministry, his only associate in the lower house was Castlereagh. Political influence was a monopoly, a patrimony. It gave some additional emotions to the pleasures and intoxications of youth. Lord Shelburn was Secretary of State at twenty-nine ; Pitt, Prime Minister at twenty-five. Chesterfield had not reached his majority on entering the House of Commons ; neither had Fox, nor Lord Liverpool. The latter negotiated, at the age of thirty, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, the peace of Amiens.

The war with the French Revolution and the Empire served the interests of the aristocracy. It greatened the aristocracy beyond *méasure*. It raised Liverpool and Castlereagh, men of mediocrity, to the height of imperial glory, and when Napoleon fell from the summit to which his fatal genius had exalted him, they basked in the rays of Trafalgar and Waterloo, admired, dreaded, like unto gods. When Europe gazed with renewed astonishment and respect upon the representatives of so fortunate a policy, when sovereigns themselves paid court to the statesmen of Great Britain, could the English people remain insensible to these triumphs ? Royalty had had no share in them. England had been saved by its aristocratic parliament, and not only saved but conducted through a

thousand dangers, by a will, Roman in its tenacity, to a pitch of power that confounds the imagination and that will astonish history when it considers only the extent and population of the British Isles.

If the foreign policy of the English aristocracy was as fortunate as it was daring, its domestic policy avoided the mistakes that have ruined most aristocracies. It never forced the nation to regard it as an enemy. It never severed openly and insolently its interests from those of the people, its honor from English honor. It could always bend so as never to break. It was never seen leaning wholly on one side in great conflicts of opinion. It could always furnish soldiers and leaders for every cause ; some great aristocratic name is mixed up with every movement, with every reform, with every political, religious and social struggle. It never seeks the glory of being lost, the feminine pleasures of a vanity that defies necessity, the bitter joys of defeat. It has instincts rather than principles, preferences rather than doctrines. It obeys traditions rather than immutable laws.

After the Revolution, the two parties,—one having overcome royalty, the other having been overcome with it,—were gradually transformed. The Jacobites became Tories. Ardent and chivalrous personal attachment to royalty was converted into cool and rational adherence to principles and theories of government. As to the Whigs, the natural defenders of the new dynasty, they had themselves weakened and neutralized royalty, so they accorded to it despotic fidelity ; it was their work, their creature, so to

speak. Placed between these jealous and haughty triumphers and a questionable royalty of the most recent date, what could the Tories do? They resisted centralization, protected the small proprietors and peasants against the opulent and greedy families. The insolence and nepotism of the conquerors, the corruption which ensues upon every great political revolution and which left the conquered comparatively intact, the lukewarmness of royalty, everything in short helped to lessen the distance between the people and a party whose principles, nevertheless, were least popular. Thus there was perpetuated in all ranks of the aristocracy a feeling of solidarity with the nation, kept up on one side by the recollections of the Revolution, on the other by political necessity and also by increased rusticity, and on all sides by the continual diffusion of ideas and interests. One common spirit pervaded all these factions quarrelling for power : namely, to change only what it was impossible to preserve, to preserve whatever did not threaten immediate destruction, to mend rather than to tear down, always to yield in time to avoid the appearance of being constrained, to set off the spectacle of English liberty with the barren turmoil and lamentable downfall of nations tormented by the dream of equality, in short, to maintain and excite in every way the patriotism of the nation and lead it to see in its venerable constitution the safeguard of its greatness and the instrument of its ambition.

These sentiments, which are never discussed but which have become, as it were, congenital forms of thought too

deep to be mere calculation, have acquired the force of instincts. They make the English aristocracy at once the most supple and the most tenacious, the proudest and the least headstrong, the most solid and the least set in its ways. A twofold clientage binds the aristocracy to the nation, that of vanity and that of needs. All the streams of wealth descend toward the aristocratic sea, and the patricians are not under the necessity, like the Roman senators, of gathering around them a train of parasites. On the other hand, the right of primogeniture keeps the younger sons and their families around the head of the house like so many satellites revolving around a planet. These concentric circles of high-born wealth and high-born poverty run into one another and overlap one another like waves, and die away far from the centre. Thus the aristocracy is always open, in the long run, to new ideas ; it never opposes progress with those imaginary barriers which no reasoning, no compromise, is able to move. By laying aside one by one the several pieces of its feudal armor, it has lost nothing of its moral power ; it has ever set greater store by its political authority than its social prestige. Its chief concern has been less for the administration than the enjoyment of the English soil. The old Norman spirit still gets the better of Roman ambition. Never was there a possession more complete, less precarious, less thwarted and annoyed by the whims and supercilious interference of what is called elsewhere the State. We look for the State in the provinces in England, but we find it nowhere. Local police and justice, roads, prisons,



asylums, schools, everything is in the hands of the land-owners. People have no faith in delegated and second-hand powers. It is not because such and such a great lord is lord-lieutenant of the county that he is respected ; he is lieutenant of the county because he is a great lord, because he has vast estates and a great name.

### III.

Parliaments have been the servants of this power that is based upon land and the only one visible to the people. The splendors of a court like Versailles have never beguiled its eye. What castles, more beautiful than royal palaces, hedged about with more dignity and an equal wealth of associations ! Ministers remain simple citizens. They go to their departments as if to business ; they are stewards, business men. Power does not put everything at their feet in a single day, rank, fortune, talent, beauty. They do not feel the intoxications of a power that is absolute although exercised in the name of a master. Pitt had personal designs, was consumed by a will that knew no confidants. By him alone was effected, for instance, the union of England and Ireland. But, for the most part, ministers,—and I include the most illustrious,—are considered less the masters than the servants of a party, or a class. Walpole, Liverpool, Palmerston never invented anything. Walpole remained in power twenty years, without losing anything of the jovial roughness of the country squire, easy-tempered, indefatigable, always ready ; shrewd,



moreover, and full of resources, his chief thought was to keep in place ; he made England greater almost without knowing it or intending it. In every cabinet there are orators and business men raised to power, and by their side are other men whose mere name has brought them there, men more indolent and equally indispensable, men of more silent ambition yet equally imperious. The political battles of England remind us of the Homeric fights, where there are always two sorts of combatants, mortals and gods. The passions of the two are almost the same, the gods are sometimes vulnerable. But Trojans and Greeks deal each other mortal blows, and when their favorites have bitten the dust, the gods withdraw to Olympus. In the cabinets of this century the Atridae have been Fox, Perceval, Canning, Peel, Disraeli, Gladstone. There have been ministers daring enough to do violence after a fashion to their own party. Before the passage of the two Parliamentary Reforms, there were some who turned their thoughts to the great people without a voice and really without representation. While serving their party, the best of them have sought to serve the nation. But they have never pretended to do it otherwise than by converting their own party to their ideas. They have never pointed the people to parliament or the aristocracy as its enemy.

“ You people of great families and hereditary trusts,” says Burke to the Duke of Richmond in his letter, 1772, “ are not like such as I am, who, whatever we may be, by the rapidity of our growth, and even by the fruit we bear, and

flatter ourselves that, while we creep on the ground, we belly into melons that are exquisite for size and flavor, yet still are but annual plants, that perish with our season and leave no sort of trace behind us. You, if you are what you ought to be, are in my eye the great oaks that shade a country and perpetuate your benefits from generation to generation." This is the same Burke who called the aristocracy "the Corinthian capital of English society." If, informing our judgment of a country, we examine the social ideal which it has created for itself,—and this is the only means of forming a correct judgment,—we must see what has been produced in the moral order by the undisputed and venerable primacy of the aristocracy. The social ideal of England is typified in the *gentleman*, a unique and almost indefinable apparition, the final fruit of the aristocratic system. What time, what struggles and efforts, what blood, what fighting it has cost to compound this ideal specimen of English manhood! Like melted metal oozing out from masses of scoriæ, this type of character has slowly disengaged itself from the coarseness, the avarice, the vulgar pride of the past.

Paley could not define, at the present day, the point of honor as : A system of rules established by men of the world to facilitate their relations with one another, and for no other object ; he would no longer maintain that this code is not violated by : Cruelty toward servants, harshness toward those dependent upon us, toward tenants, by want of charity to the poor, by injustice done to merchants by insolvency or by refusal to pay. These words were not

inaccurate as applied to the generation who took pattern after the dissolute sons of George III. ; but the triumph of liberal ideas has also been the triumph of moral ideas. The word *gentleman*, however, is quite old. It makes its appearance in the reign of Henry VI.; but it designates, for several centuries, a social condition rather than character. It has only a portion of its modern meaning, and designates those who, without having any title, are still not plebeians. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the manners of the country gentlemen were still very coarse. They were brought up by valets, game-keepers, and chaplains ranking no higher than servants. They traveled little, and seldom left their estates. The chase and its uncertainties, second-hand quarrels, family spirit, authority as magistrate and vanity as military commander, kept up the spirit of independence. Patrician hauteur was cloaked in rude plebeian garb, new ideas had hard work to penetrate these heavy intellects, these material lives, this hereditary and almost canine attachment to the narrowest political and religious dogmas. But time, culture, imperious history, have gradually transformed this character. Without losing any of its virtues or its native vigor, it has shaken off its roughness. The English *gentleman* is not the French *gentilhomme*. The qualities of his temperament are colder, more serious. His courage is not fiery, headstrong, and chivalrous; he is always calm, he neither seeks nor likes extreme danger except to display his indifference. Neither is he the *honnête homme* of the days of Louis XIV. He is less of a courtier, less polished,

less easy. He never quite abnegates himself, he respects himself too much to put on an air of nothingness or admire it in others. What in the feudal baron was indomitable pride, has become, in the course of centuries, quiet assurance. Per contra, egotism, that sentiment by virtue of which a man dares to be himself, is accompanied by a scrupulous regard for the rights of others, a delicate reserve that borders at times on timidity.

But there is no finer trait in this character than its manly love of truth. The soul clings to it with such intensity that it is imbued with it, and falsehood becomes an impossibility. The English aristocracy is the most trustworthy, the most truthful in the world. A *gentleman* would blush at changing his name or usurping a title. Nor would he find willing dupes to so low a deceit. Nowhere has the value of human words been more carefully weighed. We must go to the English courts to study the art of giving testimony, and of understanding and interpreting testimony. The Anglo-Saxon lie is not the naïve, swaggering lie of the Southern peoples, a lie that has no object and is tickled with itself. The Anglo-Saxon lie seems, even to those who are guilty of it, a horrible extremity. The eye never loses the ability to discern the light from the shade, the true from the false. The soul goes straight for the truth, like a well-aimed arrow, and swerves from its path only with great effort. Conventionalities, prejudices, fictions, are so many veils, in which the spirit envelops itself that it may not perceive the truth too clearly. If people proceed slowly, it is only because they do not like to contradict themselves.

If a child, says Johnson, declares that he has looked out of this window, and he has looked out of that, flog him. The air of freedom is fatal to deceit. To say of a man that he is *safe*, is the best praise that one can give. The English gentleman has no trouble in keeping a secret. He himself is a living secret. His life is woven of prudence and reserve. He has few confidants, he does not like to expose to the eyes of another the weaknesses, the contradictions, the incoherencies of his hidden life. He does not give himself up to the idle complainings, the indiscreet imprecations of the peoples of the South. We feel in every man the intimations of a hidden life; the heart is not a gate whose hinges are worn. Loves and hates are silent. Conscience, cased in thicker wrappings, is more delicate, more tender, more morbid. Words are measured, because words are acts. The Englishman fulfils the obligations of friendship with a scrupulous care which suggests too much of duty and too little of pleasure. It is the same with his hospitality. He owes it to himself to treat his guest well; he shows him flowers, pictures, horses, everything that he possesses—of himself, very little. In a land of aristocracy, the type of the gentleman represents the principle of equality. The least shade of servility or flattery, instinctive emotion in the presence of rank or wealth, imitation, affectation are dissonances. Imitation in every shape is vulgar, affectation is a shock to sincerity. The utmost that can be tolerated is a certain kind of awkwardness resembling shamefacedness. But the ideal is a perfect equilibrium between being and appearing, between thought

and action, with a quiet ease that ignores even more than it disdains all shams, all insulting homage, the useless luxury of vanity. Thus it is that virtue, honor, the culture of the mind have engendered a certain equality even in the very lap of privilege. Just as, in the ancient military *noblesse* in France, one *gentilhomme* was as good as every other, so in English society a gentleman is a gentleman.

You will find the gentleman in the United States as well as in England. Still, the glory of having produced the moral ideal from which the type was to proceed will remain with English civilization. It is not true that the aristocracy is open to all ; it is open only to wealth. There is a certain degree of poverty—elsewhere not to be called poverty—which throws a man out of the social category, thrusts him into a sort of gulf where he sinks down, unknown, not despised but forgotten, like a thing without a name, a human waif floating for awhile just above misery. Up above, despite diversity of condition, a sort of equality may come into being, based upon an indefinable something, upon mental culture, refinement of feeling, a certain moral vision that joins itself to the coarser visions of the senses. I do not know whether we should not find in the upper English bourgeoisie the most perfect representatives of the ideal, although that ideal has been created in the lap of aristocratic society. Like a spot of oil spreading, the ideal has long since overflowed the bounds of the aristocracy, it has reached the wealthy bourgeoisie and lastly the lower bourgeoisie itself. The middle classes have sought to make up for what they miss by more



finished virtues, a more intense culture, if I may use such an expression. In the effort they have lost somewhat of grace, but they gained in delicacy. The type, moreover, is at the present day independent. It is no longer fed from its origin ; it resembles one of those large-branched olive trees in which the trunk is reduced to a slender bark.

The office of an ideal is to dominate reality, to serve as a contrast to, and at the same time a model for facts. If we have to accord to the English aristocracy the merit of having kept itself up to the mark and having always afforded the country models worthy of imitation, it is also just to hold it responsible for the evils that have ever attended privilege. If these evils are not more apparent than they are, it is because they directly affect only the most intelligent and most cultivated part of the nation, which, moreover, is fully aware of them. The idea of right and equality pure and simple can not penetrate the coat-of-mail of artificial notions. It is always dimmed by reverence, by fiction, by a certain sort of superstitious patriotism. It surprises us to see no one in England attack the right of primogeniture, that drives every year so many men away from their country to seek their fortunes. He whom the accident of birth has not favored, the bastard of fortune, encounters without a murmur the combats and vicissitudes of life. Unremitting effort ceases to be, for many, a sorrow, and becomes almost a need. The merchant, the banker will not pause on the road to wealth, they always wish to mount still higher ; they can not, will

not rest. At twenty, one is too hopeful and too generous to attack the right of primogeniture ; at fifty, one does not attack what one has defended all his life, with his lips at least. The pleasure of defending the right is harder to enjoy than the pleasure of feeling one's self superior to injustice, a proud and silent negative pleasure well suited to discreet natures. Thus, all the passions of man, the best and the worst, are leagued together to sustain privilege :—pride, generosity, the spirit of family and of caste, the need of augmenting unceasingly the prestige which conduces to the glory and the wealth of Old England, zeal for work, the need of feasting one's self with the sight, at least, if not the actual possession of material splendor and unrivaled wealth.

Next to the sovereign, the Lords are the most exalted in the nation. For the crowd, for the peasant and the shop-keeper, a lord is not a man like every other. There is no other name to give to God. The respect that the barons once extorted by force is offered to-day as a voluntary tribute. There is no equality, not even in childhood. At Oxford, the noblemen students are distinguished by certain details of costume. When an Etonian goes to take leave of the master, he finds in the ante-room, a plate filled with bank-notes. If he is a plebeian, he gives ten or fifteen pounds ; if he is titled, as many as fifty. Young noblemen pay the head-master every year fifty guineas, double the ordinary amount. A rather matter-of-fact way of translating the famous adage, *noblesse oblige*. These exceptional privileges and obligations, which deform the natural recti-

tude of childhood, this mass of vulgar details of precedence and servile pantomime, have become matters-of-course. The mind is trained to voluntary admiration and *naïve* adoration. The spectacle of so many lives that are only combats, that attain to power and wealth only through suffering and risk, is less attractive to the naturally sombre imagination than the other spectacle of well rounded, easy, happy life, without doubt and without fear. The eye gladly turns to a lamp whose steady flame never flickers.

We find this same feeling mixed up with the most degraded instincts in that numerous class of petty bourgeois who delight in races, betting, and sports of all kinds. What these men look for in the lord, is not the man of politics, the legislator, but the man of pleasure. They like to have him spendthrift, dissipated, a good-tempered player, slightly given to vice, insolently familiar in manner. The *nouveaux riches* send their sons to the public schools and to Oxford that they may be on familiar terms with the sons of the aristocracy. They encourage rather than reprove any extravagance that their elder sons may indulge in in good company. That their sons may carry off university honors is not the chief point; what is expected of them, is that they shall bring back to the home circle names and associations. The sons of *nouveaux riches* fill the English universities. They set the tone quite as much as they accept it. Here it is that we can study at its source the fundamental principle of English society, to wit, the marriage of aristocracy and wealth.

And yet, if the nobility have any enemies, it is among

the bourgeoisie that they must be looked for. But not in the bourgeoisie that has just struggled into acknowledged existence ; rather in the bourgeoisie that has already a sort of standing and tradition of its own, receiving the rays of the sun of aristocracy full in the face, but acquainted with the nobility and its faults, and most thwarted by its privileges. Two men are brought up together at the same school, at the same university. For the one, a title, a name answer for thirty years of struggle and vexation. What toil, what humiliations, what annoyances must be endured before obtaining an ecclesiastical or a secular peerage ! And for one fortunate scaler of Olympus, how many others remain down below, among the *dii inferiores* of finance, chicanery, and administration ! Business, politics, the labored pleasures of London society often confound peers, lawyers, financiers. In the long run, the man who is active, tenacious, intelligent, well mannered, is sure of winning what might be called the moral peerage. Still, patience has its fits of muffled rage, generosity grows weary and slips at times into envy. All these confused sentiments, engendered by the conflict of ambition and weakness and bracing themselves against a good fortune that is insolent with its sweetness and cruel in its naïvety, are so many mute, invisible forces. This is no real danger for the aristocracy. The bourgeoisie, concealing beneath its admiration and homage instincts vaguely hostile, does not seek to contend with or to attack the aristocracy. On the other hand, the people, which does not hate the aristocracy, will perhaps destroy it some day. Regarding it from afar, its

admiration has less of envy and more of tolerance. It is less concerned for the social prestige of the nobility than for its political power. Hence this prestige can survive the loss of the privileges. The aristocracy will retain for a long time the immense advantage conferred upon it by its landed wealth, its high culture, and its traditions. Powers that come of the imagination are the most tenacious, and the only invincible ones ; but the political authority of the aristocracy is destined, without doubt, to grow weaker from day to day. The peers no longer play that ideal part which the theory of constitutionalism assigns to an Upper House. The weakness of their position consists in this, that they do not seem to defend justice and truth so much as their own interests, traditions of caste, rights altogether too personal. Hence their impartiality is laid open to suspicion and their political authority is weakened by the very thing that confirms their social authority. When the Radical party attacks the Upper House as injurious to the interests of the nation, then the Upper House will be in great peril. Even now, persistent opposition on its part to the measures of the Commons is not tolerated. The Lords are represented as a bridle upon the violence of mere numbers, popular majorities. That bridle will be broken, the moment it is found too repressive.

For a long time the House of Lords has held only the second place in the government of the country. Reality has been stronger than fiction. Parvenu talent will always beat hereditary talent. Even among the peers themselves,

the parvenus are the ones that make the law. The dukes and earls could not do without the law peers, the men of humble extraction and fortune. Prior to the Reform Act of 1832, the two houses, having a common origin, were really one. The peers governed the House of Commons indirectly, by deputy, sending to it their younger brothers and sons, their cousins, nephews, and creatures. Since then, the lords have felt their political power slipping slowly from them. They have silently promised themselves to yield always in time to the will of the Commons. Their compliance is the guaranty of their continuance. Their motto seems to have become : "yield in order to exist."

The lords are not so much legislators as the correctors of legislation. Mr. Bright called them, on one occasion, "tinkers of the law." But criticism of legal measures is a matter, perhaps, that calls for the most varied capacity, and the mental structure of the Upper House is a trifle too uniform for this task. Everything is understood, judged, examined, interpreted from too exclusive a point of view. In matters of foreign policy, the critical capacity of the lords has a wider range. History and diplomacy are matters appropriate to those who bear some great historic name. But even here, pompous pride of speech and the evoking of grand associations are but a thin covering for authority on the wane and traditions wearing away. The temperament of the Lords is more excitable, more warlike than that of the Commons. It seems as if the former were continually dreading the disappearance of that dream of power, of earthly might and grandeur,



which is embodied in themselves. But our times, changing everything, look with contempt on long calculations. Moreover, threatenings are no longer becoming in those who do not hold the sword. The House of Commons, sparing of the blood and treasure of the country, is the sole arbiter of peace and war, and follows only the direct and spontaneous wishes of the nation.

It is very doubtful whether the House of Lords can preserve much longer its judicial character. At this moment it is the highest court of appeals in the kingdom. It dominates the county courts and the higher courts. It is the *lucus*, the sacred grove, that one reaches after traversing all the forests of jurisprudence. Modern logic, accustomed to the distinction between legislative, executive, and judicial powers, finds them incessantly confounded in the English constitution. The peer is an hereditary legislator. This idea astonishes us less than the idea of an hereditary judge. It is easier to make laws than to interpret them. A bill comes before the hereditary legislator, framed by the Commons and sustained by public opinion. He rejects it or sanctions it. Assuredly the privilege is a great one, but the right exercise of it calls for little more than honesty and a general knowledge of the wants of the country, occasionally disinterestedness. But the administration of justice calls for very different qualities, an intelligence much more quickened, habits and special qualities not to be looked for in the first comer. Consequently, as a matter of fact, when the House of Lords becomes a court of appeals, it is composed only of the

Chancellor and the juris consults, the law peers, in a word, the parvenus. Still, the other peers have a right to sit, and sometimes they make use of it. This happened in O'Connell's case. Two of the ordinary peers brought about, by their votes, his condemnation. In a time of trouble and in a matter which would excite the multitude, the ordinary lords, doubtless, could no longer claim their judicial privileges without arousing an indignation that might prove fatal to all their privileges. Limited, then, to the law peers, the House of Lords is still a poor court of appeals. It sits so seldom in this capacity, and at such irregular intervals, that it is impossible to foretell the day or the year when it will render its judgments, and the word judgment cannot be applied to its decisions without doing violence to language. For there are no judges giving an opinion. Each peer contents himself with expressing his views in a speech addressed to the house and couched in the ordinary forms. Thus the judgments of the highest court of appeals lose their main force ; they are only the opinions of a majority, balanced often by an almost equal minority.

Finally, the jurisdiction of the House of Lords has the inconvenience of splitting the right of appeal. Certain matters go to the Lords, others—more numerous—go to the Privy Council. Explain, for instance, why appeals from the English ecclesiastical courts belong to the Privy Council, but those from the Irish ecclesiastical courts to the House of Lords, why Great Britain has not the same supreme court as the colonies. Amid this confusion, conflicts of jurisdiction may readily arise. If one of the two

tribunals has to be sacrificed some day, it will be the House of Lords. What still protects it is party jealousy, for the acting Chancellor selects the judges in the Privy Council, and gives the preference in political questions to his partisans, whereas the judicial committee of the Upper House, being permanent, seem to give assurance of more impartiality. Ceasing to be an ordinary court of appeals, the House of Lords will doubtless continue to be the high court of political justice. Nothing could be imagined more solemn, more tardy and procrastinating. A great advantage when passions run high. Remember the famous trial of Warren Hastings !

It is a conceded principle that the Lords shall relinquish to the Commons everything relating to finance. The budget is, in reality, not an ordinary law. The impost is a voluntary gift made by the nation to itself. It hands it over to the executive power and regulates the employment of it by means of the organ of the elective chamber. Hence it is that the Lords cannot amend the budget. If, notwithstanding, it is sent to them and also submitted to the approval of the Crown, this is only to avoid giving it an exceptional character in its form. As a matter of fact, the elected mandatories of the people have alone the right to dispose of the treasures of the nation. The Lords, however, although they cannot amend financial measures, can reject them, as also the sovereign can oppose his veto to every bill.

Peers can be tried only before the House of Lords on charges of high treason and felony. For simple delicts

and misdemeanors, they are amenable to the ordinary tribunals. It can not be said of them that they have this or that privilege; in reality they have but one, the peerage. But can any greater privilege be imagined than the hereditary right to govern men?

Everything in England is undergoing transformation. How might the House of Lords be transformed? The idea has been started occasionally of creating peers for life. This innovation has never met with much favor. A House comprising two categories of peers would be too much divided in case of conflict between the two, would be too dependent on the Crown if the life-peers should get the upper hand. If the latter should come to be dependent on the hereditary peers, the House would gain nothing by the triumph of birth over talent, eloquence, and great services rendered to the country. The most radical minds do not go, as yet, very far in the way of reform. Some wish to have representative peers of England, just as there are already representative peers of Scotland and Ireland. In every county of England, for instance, one or more might be elected among all the hereditary peers of the county to exercise legislative functions for a given period. It is hoped that this will restore to the House of Lords the life and activity in which it is now deficient. This problem of the Upper Chamber is one of the capital difficulties of parliamentary government. Still, it will not be brought clearly before the country until the electoral reform shall have produced all its fruits. At this moment there is no real divorce of Commons and Lords.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *The House of Commons and Parliamentary Government.*

THERE is no more august assembly than the English parliament ; its name ranks with that of the Roman senate. It has been the cradle of modern liberty ; the laws, regulations, and forms of “parliamentary” government have been adopted by all civilized countries. The whole world, knows what these words mean : motion, resolution, amendment, budget, order of the day. Rome has made the grammar of civil law ; England, the grammar of politics. She has taught Europe, America, Australia, the whole world to know and envy a certain ideal of government that makes force the handmaid of reason, surrenders power to intelligence, that, by reconciling the needs of the present with the rights of the past, prevents revolutions by reforms, that checks all impatience and bridles every ambition.

The history of the English parliaments is lost in the night of feudalism. The early ones remind us of those gatherings that Tacitus has described in writing upon the manners of the Germans.\* The Magna Charta of King

\* Mox rex vel princeps, prout ætas cuique, prout nobilitas, prout decus bellorum, prout facundia est audiuntur, auctoritate suadendi, magi, quam jubendi potestate.

John did not create a veritable national representation. It called to the royal council, together with the bishops and the peers, only the tenants of the crown. It says nothing of elections, or representation, or cities, or boroughs. Under Henry III., John's successor, there is already a true representative parliament. It is born in the shade ; the old historians scarcely take any note of these assemblages. The parliament convenes in London, Jan. 22. 1265. The letters of convocation order the sheriff\* to *choose* and send two knights for each county, two citizens for each city and two burgesses for each borough of the county. Under Edward I. (1272-1307), there were twelve parliaments, attended by knights, proprietors, and burgesses. The king made use of them in all his enterprises, notably in procuring the sanction of the murder of David of Wales and in subjugating Scotland. The parliament of 1327 was strong enough to depose Edward II. In his reign, doubtless, was effected the definitive separation of the Upper and the Lower House. The great feudal council is organized after a fashion; the roles are divided. Under Richard II., the Commons are no longer satisfied with voting the impost in a lump ; they vote sums for specified purposes. In this reign and the following (Henry IV.), parliament meets nearly every year. From the end of the thirteenth century, then, the Commons are a recognized organ of the English constitution. The sovereignty *de facto* is already with parliament. But at that time the

\* The *sheriff* is the Norman viscount of each province, or Saxon *shire*, called by the Saxons *shire-reve*.



attitude of parliament toward royalty is defensive rather than aggressive. When parliament, Sept. 30. 1399, proclaims the deposition of Richard II., the Duke of Lancaster steps up to the vacant throne and utters this formula: "In the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I, Henry of Lancaster, do challenge this realm of England, and the crown, with all the members and appurtenances; as that I am descended of the right line of the blood, coming from the good king Henry III., and through that right that God of his grace hath sent me, with help of kin, and of my friends to recover it; the which realm was in point to be undone by default of governance, and undoing of the good laws." This said, Henry seats himself on the throne. Royalty recognized parliament as its judge; parliament punished the king without punishing royalty. The wars of the Roses, however, strengthen the royal power by destroying the great families. Under the Tudors, the Commons become humble and servile. Still, Henry VIII. could write to the Pope: "The discussions of the English parliament are free and without restriction. The crown has neither the right to limit the debates nor to control the votes of the members."

By the end of the fifteenth century the kings of all the countries in Europe had contended successfully against their aristocracies: Ferdinand of Aragon, Ferdinand of Naples, Louis XI., Henry VII. It seemed as though the same causes must produce everywhere the same effects; but monarchy, although becoming more absolute, did not assume everywhere the same features. The House of

Commons was the accomplice rather than the slave of the sanguinary despotism of Henry VIII. Under the Tudors as under the Plantagenets, parliament preserved its essential privileges, it continued to fix the amount and the nature of the impost. The passion of the king and the passion of the nation had the same objects in view. Henry VIII., the most absolute king that England has ever had, unwittingly gave to parliament omnipotence. What could be prohibited or impossible for a body that had deposed and branded queens, confiscated a fourth part of the lands in the kingdom, changed the established religion, condemned innocents, changed several times the order of succession to the throne? There was nothing that it had not been called upon to do. Then it could do everything.

During the reign of Elizabeth, national fervor and religious excitement made of the queen an idol. Her arrogant caprices, her disdain of constitutional forms—still imperfectly defined, moreover—were forgiven. It was only under her wretched successor that the memorable struggle began which was to make parliament the victorious and the final master of the destinies of England. The history of this struggle will always be the grand epoch in English history. Nothing will eclipse its tragic glory, neither the Revolution of 1688, nor the struggle with the French Revolution and Bonaparte.

Parliamentary liberties are like strong roots firmly planted in the soil. The tree may have been often abused, the branches and even the trunk broken, but the stump is still there. Three great principles underlie all the events

principles ill defined at first, often disputed, but always triumphant. First, the king can make no laws without parliament. Second, he can raise no imposts without parliament. Third, if the laws are not executed, the agents of the king are responsible before the courts. Henry VIII. is obliged to yield when he attempts to impose a tax on a sixth of the revenue ; Elizabeth yields when the merchants revolt against the monopolies that she tries to create. Comines, even, boasts of the English constitution, its limited, moderated royalty.

Charles I. indulges in the dream of a Latin, a Roman royalty, by divine right ; his theologians deny the contract, the pact between royalty and the nation. From 1629 to 1640, although he had accepted the "petition of rights," which was the confession of the obligations of the sovereign, Charles I. did without a parliament. The one which he convoked in 1640 became the "Long Parliament." It struck first Laud and Strafford, and then, when the king thought to have five of its members arrested before its eyes, among them Pym and Hampden, it took its revenge on the king himself. The revolution, at first on the defensive and conducted in the name of the constitution, soon overthrew parliament itself. Cromwell, having become Protector, made an electoral reform, new Commons, a new Upper House. But these Houses neither were, nor ever seemed to be, free enough. At the moment of the Restoration, the universal cry was, "free parliament." Cromwell's electoral reform was judicious, but it was the work of violence. After him, people went back to the old parliament.

The idea of reforming the parliamentary system was not popular, nor was it to become so until our century. England was content with its Commons, whatever might be their origin. Did they not hold royalty in check? Did they not make, in 1688, a defensive revolution that gave final satisfaction to all the passions and interests of the country? So long as the predominating passions and interests are represented in a government, we can say of it that it is representative. According to the sense which we attach to the word in modern times, the English government was not representative in the last century; it is just beginning to become so. In its constitution we find this fundamental principle: not men are represented, but corporations, legal persons, cities or counties. One deputy is equal to every other, but one elector is not equal to every other. In the Act of Henry VI., there is no mention of any sum of population. Even to-day there is no ratio between the numbers of those who elect and those who are elected.

The early English parliaments were, in reality, diets of the great feudatories or their delegates. The cities were represented in their quality of free cities. A free borough had a small bit of sovereignty, free from customs, tolls, bridge-money, royal charges, and administered by a guild of merchants. It had by charter the right of holding fairs and markets and raising taxes. The right of sending members to parliament was considered onerous, it was the price of municipal liberty. Representation was often a privilege little sought after. The crown could give and

withdraw the electoral franchise; Henry VIII. and Charles II. made a great number of these boroughs so-called election boroughs. Often it was the sheriff simply who selected the electoral cities. This exorbitant privilege of the crown did not cease until the reign of Charles II. There was no fixed rule for the distribution of the electoral right even in the district itself. In some, all the freemen were electors; in others, only the members of corporations, mayors and municipal councillors.

This system, so rude and so arbitrary, was the final expression of feudalism ; it left the power with the owners of the soil, the great families. Most of the deputies represented, directly or indirectly, the triumphant aristocracy. At the close of the last century, Leeds, Birmingham, and Manchester were not represented, but the Duke of Norfolk elected *de facto* eleven deputies, Lord Linsdale nine, Lord Darlington seven, the Dukes of Buckingham and Rutland each six. There were in Galton seven electors, in Tavistock ten, St. Michael seven ; seventy deputies represented almost nobody, ninety represented in round numbers fifty electors each, thirty-seven represented one hundred each. There were two hundred deputies elected by seven thousand electors. Up to the Reform of 1832, three hundred deputies were elected *de facto* by peers, only one hundred and seventy could be considered as altogether independent. Macaulay is mistaken when he says, with reference to this reform : cities have degenerated into mere villages, villages have grown to be cities, and seems to think that the electoral villages, the rotten boroughs are all that

remains of places once important. On the contrary, there have been in every age villages, hamlets and solitudes represented as such. The famous borough of Old Sarum, that lost its electoral privilege in 1832, elected two deputies and had only twelve electors. What seemed an abuse in 1832, did not seem one in the preceding centuries. The Commons indeed represented England; not this or that village, this or that hill, with its sheep, its shepherds, its ploughs, but England. The political right of this epoch was the right of property. While all Europe was passing over to the rule of absolute kings, the English aristocracy maintained its power; bound to the soil, it derived therefrom its political nourishment. What did the irregularities and the absurdities of the electoral system matter, so long as that system left the power with those who exercised undisputed sway over the country, who defended English honor, religion and liberty? The great families held seats in parliament by the same title as their hereditary estates. The candidate issued from the castle with banners flying and music. He was cheered by the laborers. Barrels of beer were tapped, wooden tables spread with solid fare. The deputy gave his constituents a speech in which he exerted himself to tickle their risibilities. The election was a parish wake.

The rotten boroughs, the pocket boroughs, were political livings. Waller, the poet, was member from Aylesham at the age of sixteen. Fox entered parliament at nineteen as member from Midehurst, which his father, Lord Holland had bought for him; at twenty-one he was taken into



Lord North's cabinet. Power was not yet put up for competition, the national sovereignty was not regarded as a treasure to be divided up exactly among all the male inhabitants ; two parties, both aristocratic, both armed with social influence, fought only for power and exercised it in turn. They were both suited by the same electoral system. People went into politics as they go into society, with a place marked out beforehand. The great landed owners could have their relatives and clients elected in their boroughs. This patronage was often turned to the profit of men of pleasure, parasites ; and yet it could seek out a Pitt and a Burke, a Tierney, Sheridan, Canning, Brougham, Macaulay.

## II.

The old electoral system in England had the following results : it established a secret solidarity between the political parties ; the one wished to give more, the other less to the crown, but neither was willing to give up its own privilege. It associated the idea of political power with the idea of wealth, possessions ; it gave it substance and inviolability, and habituated the nation to the belief that the masters of English soil must be masters of everything. It opposed court refinement and court corruption with a certain energetic, proud, jealous rusticity. It confounded at a very early date bourgeois and nobles,\* for the

\* The son of the Duke of Bedford, during the Wars of the Roses, was the first nobleman that appeared in parliament.

younger sons of the great families were returned to the Lower House, and even the elder sons took part in political affairs during the lifetime of the father. The two estates learned to live, argue, discuss, and think in common.

The third estate and the nobility, then, did not find themselves all at once brought face to face, as in France in 1789, like two blind, impenetrable masses, one of which was to overthrow and crush the other. The bourgeois and the aristocracy were bound together by the ties of centuries ; parliament was a tree whose roots and branches live upon the same air and the same water. Prejudice, hatred, and ignorance did not raise an impassable barrier between the great and the people ; the governing race had not become a new species. Absolute power had not had the time nor the opportunity to create an artificial society, to level both aristocracy and people. The political organization was not the work of caprice, nor of a single will, nor of theory, nor of system. It was the unconscious resultant of all the natural forces, time, the hereditary principle, human energy, character, natural inequalities, events. The strength of such a society lay in its not doubting itself ; its religious faith had passed into its political faith. "The poor ye shall have with you alway." The people had an equally firm belief in this other maxim, Lords ye shall have with you alway. Life was accepted as a burden, a task, a labor ; all the laborers could not work in the same line. What do the inequalities or even the injustices of a day matter to one who has the vision of an

infinite future ? Over and above these thousand existences, some easy and brilliant, others dull, sombre, hopeless, but all ephemeral, there was upon earth one prolonged and durable existence, that of England. Whatever glorified and embellished this was good ; whatever fortified it was useful. The Christian idea of sacrifice is the cord binding together the nation as well as the family. What gifts are we not ready to make to the idol we call country ! Modern politicians do not take sufficiently into account that the people, a child in heart and mind, has a life wholly imaginative ; it is the humble and lowly who take most delight in dreams of greatness. Why does the Breton, who has never seen and who will never see the tower of Strasburg cathedral, suffer to-day so keenly from the loss of Alsatia. Beyond question, there is many a peasant in France who would willingly barter away for that fair province his infinitesimal fraction of impotent sovereignty. As long as England waxed great, beat down its rivals, defied Rome and the Catholic powers, the sight and the sound of these conflicts filled all minds ; there was no room for egoistic calculations. The English political hierarchy would not have been respected for so many years, had England not been threatened by so many enemies, had she had only domestic needs and troubles. But her life was a long conquest in self-defence, in Europe and India, in the Antilles and Canada. If she was not a great power, she was nothing. If she could not make herself respected in every sea, she could not defend her own coast. Thus she became accustomed to regard the entire world

as her enemy. Hence extraordinary tension, imperious ways, a chronic state of crisis, haste, and disquiet beneath a surface apparently so phlegmatic, a disposition to gain its ends by using the most every-day and near-at-hand agents. England has always been a general more eager to win battles than to change the uniform of his soldiers.

Whatever might be its defects, the English parliament has ever had this great merit : it knew how to govern—whether with the king or contrary to the king—in the interests of the country. The corruption of the electoral colleges did not infect those elected. Paley had said, the main point was the man elected, not the elector. From these elections, whether orgies, or farces, or bargains, the hand of the crown had long been withdrawn. A law passed in the reign of George II. forbids the presence of soldiers within two miles of the place of election, and they cannot return until two days after. All office-holders salaried by the crown, revenue-farmers as well (Fox's Bill), are excluded from parliament ; a sheriff cannot be elected in his county ; judges are ineligible, because appointed by the king. The electoral lists are made out by provincial employees, the inspectors of the poor ; the circuit judges select a legal board of revisers, who settle disputed points. The State is nowhere to be seen in all these operations. Neither is the State to be seen on election-day. The commissioners of election are in the counties the sheriff, in the cities the mayor, in boroughs that have no mayor some leading person chosen by the sheriff. The elections are absolutely free ; the two parties are left to themselves.

Electoral meetings\* are as free as the elections. Which system is the better, that which restrains liberty, or that which restricts the number of electors? An election is a sort of party-duel with established rules ; the State looks on as a witness.

This system, so simple and so honest, is possible only where party organization is a growth of centuries. There are many countries that have a parliament, an Upper and a Lower House ; but there are few that have true parliamentary government. The peculiar characteristic of that government consists in bringing face to face two parties, one of which holds the power, the other being always ready to take its place whenever it commits any blunder and ceases to satisfy controlling instincts and interests. In such a government, the State is not something superior to and outside of parties, profiting by their divisions, deriving its strength from their weakness, its permanence from their instability. The ideas of the nation are distilled into the electoral body, and from it pass into the parliamentary majority, until, finally, they are incorporated in a committee called the Cabinet. Over all is the crown, indifferent, in appearance at least, and impartial, nothing more than the image of national unity. It is a great mistake to consider England as the country by eminence where the three powers, executive, legislative, and judicial, are separate and independent. On the contrary, the legislative and executive powers are thoroughly confounded. Such a system would give rise to tyranny or anarchy, were individual will

\* Caucuses, or primaries? TR.

inordinate, ambition all-consuming and reckless of national interests. But, in an aristocratic parliament, the thirst for omnipotence, natural to man, loses somewhat of its violence. In other countries, parliamentary members have to choose between power and nothingness ; politics become a personal matter ; people follow men, not principles or traditions. In England, politicians submit to a self-imposed discipline, the most eager ambition is regulated by obedience more or less sincere to venerable parties. One comes into power with his party, and expects as a matter of course to go out with it. One waits patiently for years, until the blunders of the opposite party shall lose it the confidence of the country and the majority in parliament. One has often to content himself all his life with the thankless role of fault-finder. One becomes resigned to being nothing, is kept in the ranks of the vanquished party by a sense of honor. People did not invent in England the convenient maxim, that it is always allowable to serve the State. The State is never anything but one of the parties in power ; if it has need of servants, it has also need of successors.

On the continent, the notion of systematic opposition has met with disfavor. The opposition in England is always systematic in this sense, that there is always a certain number of men engaged in criticising the government, in pointing out all its errors and defects. There is a potential government co-existent with the government *de facto* ; the opposition has its staff, its leaders, and its discipline. It is very certain that long continuance in power



makes a party barren, takes from it its power of invention, its elasticity ; it becomes like a field that has need to lie fallow a while. Well disciplined opposition, on the contrary, sharpens the faculties. One must show himself deserving of the power, must exercise his ingenuity, promise the country something and never promise anything impossible. Moreover, in a country naturally disposed to respect success, there is a decided benefit in forcing statesmen to learn to do without success ; we have not here the spectacle of generals, or even soldiers, deserting from one camp to the other, pinning the fortunes of the State to their own fortunes, betraying the principles that they have long espoused and defended in public. The human intellect, doubtless, can not remain forever imprisoned in the same formulas ; public opinion does not force statesmen to obstinate inflexibility. But it rarely happens that those endowed with superior mental qualities do not carry off their friends with them in the direction in which they are led by their own reason. Fox could go over to Lord North, whom he had denounced for eight years as an obsequious minister, a patron of tax-gatherers, a pilot asleep at his post. But when Fox embraced the principles of the French Revolution and seemed to hesitate between his own country and France, Burke, who had fought so long by his side, withdrew publicly his friendship. Fox, good-natured and generous, tried a thousand ways of reconciliation, which Burke always rejected. My breach with Mr. Fox, he writes, was a matter of principle, not a passion ; I considered it a sacred duty to confirm what I had said and

written, by this sacrifice. What would be the good of a passing reconciliation? I can no longer take delight in him, nor he in me.—And when Burke was attacked by the malady that was to prove fatal to him, Fox, deeply touched, asked to see him. He received the following reply:

Mrs. Burke presents her compliments to Mr. Fox and thanks him for his kind inquiries. She has communicated his letter to Mr. Burke, and informs him, at Mr. Burke's request, that Mr. Burke felt the most profound regret at breaking off, in obedience to the voice of a duty, a friendship of long standing, but that he made the necessary sacrifice; that his principles remain unchanged; and that, in the little time he has left to live, he considers it his duty to live for others and not for himself. Mr. Burke is convinced that the principles he has endeavored to uphold are necessary to the well-being and dignity of the country, and that these principles can be strengthened only by convincing everybody of his sincerity.—(*Recollections of the Life of Fox*, by B. Walpole.)\*

This seriousness of opinion has about it something terrible, almost tragic. In this matter, no doubt, the most vital interests of England were at stake, everything that in Burke's estimation constituted its grandeur and its power. But we may say that even in secondary matters parties show remarkable tenacity; there are few men who speak

\* I regret my inability to produce the original passages. The work from which they are taken is not to be found in our public libraries. TR.

lightly of politics, as a futile subject. One must be or appear to be sincere and convinced.

In the House of Lords, which takes a less active part in legislation, opinions are almost hereditary ; the spirit of the ancient families is transmitted with the blood. The privileges of primogeniture link together the successive representatives of a name, as with a moral chain. On quitting the university, the beardless young lord takes his place at Westminster on the side where his ancestors sat. Wherein does he differ from his friend seated on the other side ? They have the same habits, the same prejudices, the same political, religious, and moral ideal, and yet, so long as they live, the one will vote yea when the other votes nay. They feel that they are in the exercise of a certain function, they are like weights of the same metal attached to the two ends of a lever ; when one goes up, the other goes down.

These traditions, although in a less imperative tone, manifest themselves in the House of Commons. Thus there are always two parties confronting one another ; their names change from age to age, the problems of the last century are not those of the present. The royal prerogative, which was a long time in dispute, seems at the present day to be perfectly defined. Social questions taking precedence of constitutional. The Whigs have become Liberals, the Tories Conservatives ; but the turn of mind, the instincts and aspirations of the Tories reappear in the Conservatives, in a modified shape. The modern Conservatives have principles of government which would

astound, in many countries, those who flatter themselves with being the representatives of progress. Tories and Whigs have the same respect for the constitution and popular rights, the same political habits. Neither party dreams of usurping power, or of maintaining itself in power by other than lawful means, by persuasion and majorities. You may converse for a long time with an English politician before perceiving that he belongs to the one or the other party. We do not detect in those who are waiting for their turn in power that bitterness, that impatience, that lassitude in fidelity, or that desperate ardor which are to be seen in France, Spain, or Italy. The word "defeated" is scarcely applicable to men who simply retire from business.

Still, it is a matter of astonishment that political organizations should possess such solidity and be metamorphosed so slowly, the more so as the oscillations which raise and depress a party have often been extremely slow. The Revolution of 1688 raised the great Whig families to power. The new establishment had to contend with the most obstinate passions ; for one half of the nation it bore for a long while the character of a usurpation, almost of a conquest. William III. had come as a master, with his regiments ; he always continued to be his own minister of foreign affairs. England was not his predominating thought, only one of his instruments against the power of Louis XIV. At home, nothing could be refused to those who had given him the crown ; they were ruined, if they ceased to be omnipotent. The Whig oligarchy abused its

victory, as all conquerors do ; it bought up parliament. In the times of the Revolution, the debates of the Houses were not published ; in fact, the voting was secret. The traffic in votes under the Georges was shameless. The Hanoverian dynasty, imported from Germany, was not firmly attached to English soil. Queen Caroline, more manly than her husband, had her moments of rebellion. "Do you, my lord, pretend to talk of the opinion of electors having any influence on the elected? — — — how can you have the assurance to talk to me of your thinking the sense of their constituents, their interests, or their instructions any measure or rule for the conduct of their representatives in parliament."\* Caroline, brought up in the despotic ideas of the Continent, respected in English liberty only the prestige, the halo that they shed over England. By means of her support, Sir Robert Walpole remained minister twenty years ; he raised corruption into a system.

The tide that had exalted the Whigs in 1688 did not commence to ebb until the reign of George III. The Whigs were ruined by their own excesses. After the defeat of the Pretender, the Jacobite party had been transformed ; it had become simply the monarchical party, had made a *mariage de raison* with the new dynasty. Its roots were still in the provinces, it was henceforth a national party, no longer turning its eyes abroad. It still supported the royal prerogative, but its political theories had no longer the character of a religious faith. The party had

\* Memoirs of Lord Hervey.

ipened, as it were, for the government. The reign of the Whigs had lasted almost without interruption for seventy years, from the death of Queen Ann ; it ended when Lord North formed the coalition with Fox. Looking at history only across the summits, we may say that the Tories kept the ascendancy until 1832. Since then the Liberals have taken the lead. These great oscillations are liable to stop, or even to retrograde for a moment, but still they are strong impulses that make themselves felt through several generations. George III. raised the Tories from their long disgrace. The young sovereign, more of an Englishman than his predecessors, felt himself also more of a king. The preceding reigns had served to put in practice parliamentary government ; its rules were so well established that the battles for the royal prerogative fought under George III. were but skirmishes, compared with those fought under the Stuarts. The Tories were now merely the king's friends. They treated foreign affairs with more of roughness and hauteur, domestic affairs with a more conservative spirit. The French Revolution alarming the entire world by its crimes, the Empire alarming it by its ambition, riveted, so to speak, the Tories in power. The instinct of self-preservation acts upon peoples as upon individuals ; in moments of great peril, nations cling, unless their very instincts are corrupt, to what seems most firm and most solid. When everything in Europe succumbed, when the most formidable powers passed under the yoke of a crowned parvenu, England became for a moment the sole refuge of liberty, the only land undefiled by conquest and oppres-



sion. Of what avail were the generous and pacific hopes of the Whigs, when the world was delivered up to force and war was the last resort of honor? The old English constitution, like a fortress, raised its drawbridges.

The great conservative flood that had swallowed up Imperial France subsided only slowly. The Whigs did not actually begin to reign until 1830; they effected an electoral reform, but since then they appear to be preoccupied rather with moderating the progress of democratic ideas than with combating their ancient enemies. Both conservatives and liberals have long had only one common object; they seek to keep the shaping of English politics in the hands of the middle classes. They remain separated, not so much to injure one another as to avoid the risk of losing everything united. We can scarcely say that the one is more disposed, or the other more opposed, to reform. The spirit of reform is making its way into both.

Outside of the old party formations, there have always been a few irregular factions, which, without pretending to form a part of the government, have nevertheless exercised considerable influence upon the march of events by taking up one side or the other, by shifting the centre of gravity, and by introducing new ideas into parliament. The Free Traders, the Peelites, the so-called Radicals of the present day, have never amounted to real parties, but they have supplied new dogmas, theses, and doctrines. They have more sincerity than ambition; they are more interested in the triumph of their doctrines than in their own personal

triumph. Thus a sort of tacit understanding is established between those who are in daily conflict. In countries where parties speak incessantly of concord, we may say that there is no concord; they cry peace, peace, but there is no peace. In England, parties never offer the olive-branch; they pursue, combat, rail at each other unremittingly, but their hostility is not mortal.

Electoral reforms have not yet altered the nature of parliament. The Reform of 1867 was very radical, it augmented considerably the number of electors. But the constitutional ideal has not been changed. To-day, as of old, the member is a representative, not a simple delegate, that is to say, he represents interests rather than persons; he is not subjected to binding instructions. Sovereign up to the day of election, the electoral body disappears the day after. Each interest seeks its electoral colleges, buys them, if need be. The elector transmits, after a fashion, a power that he does not create; he resembles the driving-belt of a machine. The real power is in things durable, in natural or created wealth, in land, manufactures, capital; the electors do little else than give it expression. The insurance companies, for instance, are interested in being represented in parliament; they have found docile electors, and now control fifty seats (1867). The land, at the time when the Reform of 1867 was passed, had 396 representatives from counties, to say nothing of 200 from the boroughs but belonging to the class of landed proprietors.

Land and vested capital divide parliament between them. Land has still the lion's share; it can count upon

500 votes. The rest belongs to commerce, mining, manufactures, banks, money-dealers. Just as in society movable fortune seems less noble than landed wealth, so in politics uncertain, shifting capital yields the precedence to the eternal, immovable capital of centuries. Moreover, there is no longer any rivalry between them, as in the days when the Corn Laws were abolished. Everybody knows that the richer English commerce, the richer English land. Profits made in the four corners of the globe will come home to sleep in better drained fields and meadows and take shape and substance in the walls of country-seats. A thousand arms reach out like tentacles gathering up the wealth of the earth to bring it back to old England. The spirit of parliament has its tenacious traditions that survive all reforms. The electoral body has to submit to them; the electors can only *choose* between two men who, behind different masks, have the same face. The Reform of 1832 inured more especially to the benefit of the class of small shopkeepers, it gave them a numerical majority. Yet who would dare to say that the shopkeeper-class governed England from 1832 to 1867. It is content with selling its votes to what are called in England the governing classes; it has not had any men of *élite* of its own, any political aims of its own; at the utmost, it has had passions and prejudices easily satisfied. Moreover, there is no class more devoted to lords and aristocracy, taken more naïvely with rank and wealth, than the class of small traders. They are the least noble element in the nation; the retailers are the most corrupt electors, the most complacent

tools of electoral corruption. This corruption has been just as shameless after 1832 as before. From time to time, investigating committees look into it and follow it up, but the publicity of their proceedings, so far from checking the evil, seems only to familiarize the public mind with the ways of electoral venality. In the boroughs and counties, votes are sold to the highest bidder, Whig or Tory. The Liberals are no more scrupulous than the Tories. To carry on an election, one must secure the men of the law and the publicans. The parliamentary brokers scatter money, the publicans lavish beer; the great brewers, who own nearly all the tap-rooms, are a power in the state. The petty trader does not consider himself dishonored by making ten or twenty pounds out of an election; the candidate is not dishonored by buying for several thousand pounds the honor of making laws.

The Reform of 1832 changed parliament very little. That of 1867 gave the franchise in the boroughs to every man domiciled for a year and paying the poor-rates, whatever his rent might be. In the counties, the elector must pay a rent of twelve pounds. We are reduced to mere conjectures, in attempting to estimate the consequences of this new reform. The Cassandrae have made the most dismal prophecies. People fear that they have given too many rights to numbers and ignorance. We must resign ourselves, says Mr. Lowe, to teaching our new masters the alphabet. Yet people may take courage. In the first place, the reform was not forcibly wrested by the people from the governing classes. For many years, the cry of

reform was only a sop to popularity ; people promised it without desiring it. As long as Lord Palmerston's ministry lasted, they knew that they could speak of it without danger. After his death, the liberal party, no longer sustained by his popularity, considered itself obliged to present a Reform bill ; but it soon raised a spirit of opposition in its own ranks, coming chiefly from the great families. These latter dreaded not so much a reduction of the voting qualification as a reconstruction of the electoral districts and the suppression of their last remaining rotten boroughs. Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone beheld a portion of their own army turning against them. At the last moment they were seized with the fear of demagogism and the unknown. Had England, rich and prosperous, need to change anything ? Why not suffer it to enter the future quietly, like a vessel in familiar waters ?

The defeated reformers organized popular demonstrations. The railing of Hyde Park was torn down one day when an attempt was made to prevent the meeting. This new force,—numbers,—that wished to enter parliament, showed itself in the street. The Conservative party, surprised to find itself in power, thought it necessary, in order to keep there, to pass itself a reform that it had rejected only the day before. There are scarcely any *doctrinaires* in England ; the government takes upon itself the task of satisfying the country ; it does not pretend to be wiser than the country. The Tories, then, passed the Reform, just as on a previous occasion they had got ahead of their adversaries in the merit of the Catholic Emancipation and

the abolition of the Corn Laws. The session of 1867 was not enthusiastic but resigned ; it was a question of who should open most widely the gates of reform. Mr. Disraeli stopped just short of universal suffrage.

Myself a witness of these peaceable changes, I am convinced that the popular pressure was not so strong as to render postponement dangerous. The people might have been put off, or at least satisfied more cheaply ; but there was a desire to remove every apprehension and even the mere thought of a convulsion. It was perceived that the venerable social edifice would be less threatened, were the concessions made by the party most attached to the past. The Conservatives sacrificed their principles not so much to their ambition as to a sort of profound and jealous patriotism that seeks to spare England the trials and mortifications of Revolution. The part played in these events by the aristocratic party by eminence forms a sort of secret alliance between those who are most enamored of change and those who have the most to dread from it. In every Radical there is a hidden Conservative. The English people does not look upon its nobles as enemies or foreigners. When a young lord turns Radical, which happens frequently, he obtains the votes of the workingmen more readily than a plebeian would. Whatever question of social reform may come up, education, the hygiene of the great cities, wages, working hours, cheap lodgings for the poor, public aid, the people can always see peers in the foremost rank of the innovators. The people is still attached to its aristocracy, regards it with complacency,



like a father who, lost in the crowd and standing in the mud, sees his daughter drive by dressed for the ball.

The new Reform has not yet changed the *personnel* of parliament. Wealth and aristocracy are still sovereign. The political centre of gravity has been scarcely shifted. As before, parliament may be called "a club of rich men." The admission fee is from two to five thousand pounds (even these figures are exceeded sometimes), and each reelection costs a like sum. The budget does not contain, and doubtless will not for a long time, any section entitled "members' salaries." Public opinion rejects the idea of a salaried deputy. The candidates, then, are exclusively landed proprietors, or sons of landed proprietors, men grown wealthy in trade, manufactures, or banking, lawyers whose parliamentary career swells their clientage. The title of M. P. is worth money to those who are in business, but it first requires a good deal of money to obtain it. Men of letters and journalists do not aspire to the honor; it would be too costly a luxury. How can election expenses be diminished? The more the right of suffrage is extended, the greater become the necessary expenses. Custom is mightier than law. The candidate must shower down a rain of Danae upon his district. He scarcely knows where it falls, he himself does not set about corrupting the voters; that is the business of his agents, who, when called upon for their accounts, can always produce sham ones perfectly regular in appearance. The member has not the resource of official patronage, as in highly centralized countries. He has to spend his own money in subscribing

for schools, churches, asylums, monuments, games, and hunting. Ambition pays its tithe. Many a man will rage and fume at these terrible taxes, but no man is willing that others should be exempt; one pays dearly for the defeat of one's rivals. The laws against electoral corruption serve only to restrict the number of candidates, for, in a hundred persons able to buy a seat, there are not many who will run the risk of having that taken away from them which has cost them so much. In spite of all laws, the House of Commons, then, will continue to be a *rich* body. No one is going to attend to the business for a poor or an economical man. If a Mill or a Gladstone comes into question, the electors themselves will consent to become election agents; but these exceptional cases are rare. Mr. Mill expressed his wish to be returned for Westminster without paying anything. He was returned, but his election cost his friends fifty thousand francs.

The aristocracy no longer seeks, as it did formerly, to govern solely with an eye to its own interests. It gives up whatever it considers it must lose; yet it can not destroy itself with its own hands, it can not eradicate its own instincts. The working men, who have become electors by the operation of the recent Reform, do not seek, as yet, to elect working men as their representatives; they do not even seem to have thought seriously of it. The English working man is not revolutionary by disposition; his only wish is for reforms, and these he obtains from political parties. The agitators who flatter him win his applause; but they would not dare to call upon him for his blood, they

would not be able to lead him on to an assault upon royalty and the constitution ; their agitator-glory, radiant in the halls, sinks into the shade at Whitehall. The people growls, and surges, and heaves to and fro, but it is still kept down by respect for the constitution, or rather for a something which is without a name in the political vocabulary but which symbolizes the grandeur of historic reminiscences, the majesty of the present, and that invisible force that has built up England and secured its duration, its moral authority, its unparalleled fortune. The Christian idea of duty and self-denial has also its place in these simple hearts, that console themselves for their own insignificance by the prospect of national prosperity. They have not been altogether sullied by cold selfishness. The English people is not merely a human dust. Its wishes are knit together by one common cement ; in its great and painful exertions it demands only one thing from the State and the governing classes, the thing that it regards as the strictly necessary of human life : liberty, protection for the weak, helpless, and unfortunate. Socialism itself does not cease to be Christian ; it raises up neither Epicurus nor Babeuf ; it has its allies in palaces and among the privileged classes. The English working man is not indifferent to politics, for cheap newspapers give him abundant pabulum ; he is often mistaken as to the power and province of the State, but his understanding is untainted. He is rather more given to admiring than to hating what is better than himself ; his wish is rather to rise in life than to pull down others.

As long as this is so, the doors of parliament will be closed to demagogues, adventurers, dangerous measures. There is something in Anglo-Saxon roughness that repels flattery. The people considers those its friends who exert themselves to give it bread and meat and cheap clothing, who protect its children from industrial rapacity and promise to give them better instruction. It would mistrust those who told it that ignorance and poverty are the only masters, the only legitimate judges, having the sole right to make and administer law. The revolutionary spirit has not yet crossed the threshold of the House of Commons. The spirit of reform finds for its agents parties perfectly organized, who relieve each other in power like gangs of workmen in a mine. The House remains even at this day, the model of political assemblies. Its presiding officer has the gravity and impartiality of a judge. It has no written code of proceedings ; hoary precedents answer for laws. It knows the value of time. Its work is enormous, for it governs the greatest empire in the world. Compare it with other assemblies where the less the work, the more the talk, where whole days are given up to idle words, theoretical discussions, quarrels. The assemblies of less experienced countries do not know how to make use of their power, especially at the start. They are discursive, they stick fast in the mire of rhetoric ; they resemble an army that does not know how to manœuvre and runs to and fro without falling into line. Complicated regulations, reports, the discussions and intrigues of bureaux waste their time. In England, parliamentary action

is more manly. Every motion is brought directly before the House and defended there, on each reading, by the mover himself ; it does not pass through the mysteries of bureaux to reappear transfigured in some theatrical report ; it is addressed to a government, to a chamber prepared for every discussion, to parties who know how to come to a decision, and are not reduced to the necessity of first hunting themselves up. Parliamentary functions have less resemblance to acting a part. There are not two phases to every discussion, one in secret and one in public. The clubs, it is true, serve as a sort of parliamentary ante-chamber, where future discussions are prepared for and future action agreed upon. In grave emergencies, the leader of a party will even convene his adherents in his own house ; but all the great debates before the Commons are none the less direct and spontaneous. The parties have no need of learning their lessons beforehand.

Drawn for the most part from the aristocratic caste, the House of Commons is still very republican in its manners. The standing of a member does not turn on his wealth or on his name ; only on his talent, or rather on his character. There is no servility ; we feel that there is a sort of political equality resembling the social equality that puts all "gentlemen" on an equal footing. The Commons do not always lend a "willing ear," but they never refuse it to a tried servant of the nation, or to a maiden effort. After the lord, the M. P. is the most exalted man in the country. What dignity can outrank that of a legislator ? We must not be astonished at parvenus opening

with a golden key the doors of Westminster. Once a member of parliament, the *nouveau riche* is the peer of any man ; he becomes the "Honorable Friend" of all that is most illustrious. He is the visible exponent of national power ; he floats upon the current of grandeur, is bathed in a nimbus of light ; he is sovereign. The people was displeased when its "Great Commoner," Pitt, became, in 1776, Lord Chatham. The sovereignty of the Commons is the most live, the most active, the most complete. The great orators retire to the exile of the Upper House only when they feel their ardor dying out, themselves consumed by their own fire. Then they look from afar, often with envy, upon those combats in which they no longer have a share.

### III.

Parliament, says Blackstone, has absolute power and is omnipotent. The familiar saying is that the House of Commons can do everything but make a man a woman, or a woman a man. It is very certain that parliamentary power has no well defined limits. The functions of the sovereign have never been defined, and parliament is a sovereign in three persons, the King, the Lords, the Commons ; of these three persons, the first two are at present the least active. Every law must have the sanction of the Lords and the King. But royalty never withholds it when the two houses are agreed, and the Lords always



yield in time to the will of the nation as expressed in the Commons.

The Crown has never been despoiled by law of its ancient prerogatives ; in theory, its authority is almost unlimited. There is no written constitution obliging it to take its ministers from parliament or to dismiss a ministry unacceptable to the chambers. The ministers are ministers of the Crown ; the cabinet is a royal council. Judges exercise their office solely by virtue of a royal patent that can be revoked at any time. The king appoints the commander-in-chief of the army ; even the army itself is *his* army. No action can be brought against the sovereign. He governs the established church, the Convocation is only his council. Ecclesiastical supremacy in the days of Henry VIII., Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I., gave the king absolute authority over the church, which was exercised through the medium of a high court of commission, that punished all ecclesiastical delicts and became, under Laud, an object of terror to the nation. Who would recognize to-day in the remains of the ecclesiastical courts (the Court of Arches) the court of high commission ?

Nothing has been changed in the words, everything in the substance. Royalty is an antique façade covering modern buildings. The right of veto still exists, but since the beginning of the eighteenth century parliament has never once heard the formula : *le roy s'avisera*. Surrounded by the circles of the aristocracy, like the sun with its planets, royalty still remains for the people the visible image of the nation. The regards of men are fixed more readily upon

men than upon ideas; but when those men are the representatives of ideas, regard becomes a sort of religion. The simple words the king, the queen, awaken in the breast of the Englishman all those passions which are his pride and his chief concern and which have passed into the fibre of national being. For the idea of royalty is not merely associated with the idea of ancient possession, of glorious souvenirs, of good or evil fortune shared in common. It is also associated with the idea of a treaty, a solemn pact protecting religious and civil liberty.

This treaty still exists. It was made with William of Orange. The Declaration of Rights is a reminder of the crimes and errors that necessitated the Revolution. Henceforth the king shall not, by exercising a pretended right of dispensation, suspend the operation of penal laws; he shall not levy taxes without a vote of parliament, nor maintain a standing army in time of peace. The Declaration confirms the right of petition and electoral freedom, avers the freedom of parliamentary debate and the right of the nation to such an administration of justice as shall be humane and in accordance with law. All these rights and possessions are the inviolable heritage of the English nation, and the executive authority is entrusted to the new dynasty upon the condition that this heritage shall be kept intact. We must come down as far as 1830 to find anything like it, an open treaty between a nation and a king. In England, people do not speak of "divine right;" the executive power is not so much a property as a function. The nation is faithful to the king, the king to the nation.

The new royalty, by aiding and abetting the nation against the old, relinquished any and every claim to omnipotence. Showing itself now more, now less exacting, it was led perforce to retain only so much of royal power as would be an obstacle to pretenders and ambitious aspirants. We still feel, after many generations, this exceptional character of the English monarchy. It has not the manners nor the tone of continental monarchies. It does not speak to England as the Hapsburgs speak to Austria, or the Hohenzollern to Prussia, or as the Bourbons once spoke to France. It feels itself more identified with the nation and at the same time more foreign, we might almost say, to the nation. It has the same principles without having the same blood, it is united to it by interests rather than by instincts. It rises above parties like an arbiter. It is not so much a race as a magistracy. Its real principle is utility. "We love," says Cowper, "the king who loves the law."

Since the downfall of the Stuarts, the discussions upon royal prerogative have been only household quarrels. The monarchy no longer said: To be or not to be; it argued and bargained. The last devotees of royalty were the so-called "friends of the king," under George III., who did not go to court but who attacked the administration in the name of the sovereign, with whose secret plans they claimed to be acquainted. In reality, it was their own plans that they defended. Lord Bute was the last favorite. George III. liking him, made him all at once Secretary of State. Bute delivered his first speech in the capa-

city of prime minister; at the end of two years, weary of power, he retired without any apparent motive. Under the first two Georges, royalty was in tutelage. George I. was surrounded by greedy women and courtiers who preferred money to power. George II., heavy and phlegmatic, suffered Chatham to reign supreme. George III., more of an Englishman and less of a German, more of a king than his predecessors, was the only one that dared to fight for his prerogative. There was nothing of the despot about him, but he took a serious view of his authority, and wished to shake off the yoke of the great families. He failed to understand constitutional fictions; he laid as much stress upon the show of power as upon the power itself; he never permitted his ministers to be seated in his presence. Pitt he sacrificed to a religious scruple. His resistance to the projects of that statesman prevented the reconciliation of England and Ireland. The war with America was his war. As long as it lasted, he was Prime Minister with North. In his letters to North he is for ever speaking of his honor, his rights, his dignity. At times he threatens to fit out his yacht and return to Hanover. Although this personal administration of the king's had brought about nothing but disaster, he retains influence enough to cause the rejection of the India Bill, and the downfall of the coalition ministry of North and Fox by a private note written by himself and hawked around by Lord Temple.\* The king's ally, Pitt, minister at the age of

\* His Majesty authorizes Lord Temple to say that whoever votes for the India Bill is not only not his friend but must be considered

twenty-four, fought for a sovereign who did not like him, and routed the great families. Nevertheless, kept in power by his popularity, by the blunders of Fox, and by the war with France, he held the royal prerogative within bounds. The king submitted to him without forgiving him his hauteur and his genius. At last the king's insanity threw everything under the control of parliament ; it reduced royalty to a fiction. Although no party proposed to suspend the sovereign, this very respect itself enforced the suspension of the exercise of royal functions ; the nation loved its poor old king, but felt itself governed only by parliament.

In the case of George IV., the king had been undone beforehand by the Prince of Wales ; his heinous alliance with the opposition, his notorious lawsuits, his vices, his secret marriage disarmed him and delivered him up to the power of parties. After William IV., the royal prerogative passed into the delicate hands of a woman ; she divested it of every oppressive character, making herself more and more impersonal. Queen Victoria, protected by her sex, by a spotless life and the integrity of her character, has played, as if without an effort, this part of supreme arbiter among parties which constitutional theories assign her. The nation perceives her rising above parties, rather resigned to greatness than anxious to be adorned by it, faithful to her advisers but having no favorites. Humane, his enemy, and, if these words are not strong enough, Lord Temple may use such other language as he shall judge to be stronger and more efficacious.—The India Bill took the government of India out of the hands of the Company and gave it to a commission appointed by parliament.

averse to war, she has never sided with one party against the other, she has never conspired against the Commons. She has reigned in the light of day; she has had no secret diplomacy nor occult policy nor court hostile to parliament. The Queen laid down very clearly, in 1852, the outline of what she considered the rights of the crown, in a note read in parliament by Lord Russell. The memorandum was couched in these words: \* The Queen expects Lord Palmerston (then chief of the cabinet) to state distinctly what he proposes to do in a given case, in order that Her Majesty may know distinctly to what she is giving the royal sanction. In the next place, Her Majesty expects that after a measure has received her sanction it shall not be changed or modified arbitrarily by the minister. Her Majesty will be obliged to consider such an act as a breach of faith toward the Crown, deserving to be punished by the exercise of the constitutional right of dismissing the ministry. Her Majesty expects to be informed of whatever passes between the ministry and foreign powers before any important decisions are reached, to receive dispatches seasonably, to receive documents requiring her signature in time to inform herself of their contents before signing.

We can not call these pretensions exaggerated. The Prime Minister is to submit to the Queen all the important decisions of the cabinet, and to inform her of the principal votings in parliament, but the Queen takes no part in the

\* The author having omitted to cite his authority, I am unable to reproduce the original of this interesting note.—TR.



discussions of the cabinet. Political theorizers have tried to find in England an example of the separation of the three powers. But the secret of the English constitution is, on the contrary, the union of the legislative and executive powers. What is the cabinet? A committee of the legislative assembly invested with every executive function. The Prime Minister is an elective and deposable sovereign governing in the name of the hereditary sovereign. The ministers are in name the servants of the Crown, in fact the servants of parliament. In theory, the sovereign chooses the members of the executive committee ; in reality, they are chosen by the majority of the Commons. When a ministry is overthrown, the sovereign summons the leader of the victorious party, who brings with him his friends and adherents, all those who have helped to gain the victory or who may contribute to its consolidation.

The *cabinet* began with the *cabal*. The institution that is now regarded as the essential organ of parliamentary government was looked upon at first with mistrust. The ministers were the king's men ; in fact, they still call themselves Her Majesty's Ministers, for in England a name is changed long after the thing, while in France the thing is changed only long after the name. At first, there was no solidarity in the cabinet ; now, this solidarity is so close that a minister is responsible for a measure that he may have opposed in council. If he differs from his colleagues on an important point, he can resign. The deliberations of the council are held perfectly secret ; no

minutes are kept. The ministers never write or speak about what takes place in their conferences.

To say that the cabinet is a committee of the House would make it sound almost revolutionary ; we should add, by way of correction, that this committee has no more binding instructions than the members of parliament themselves have. The mystery thrown around the cabinet and the solidarity of its members give it a sort of freedom of conscience. The majesty of the Crown is also preserved by these precautions. No Englishman could remain minister for any length of time if he were not able to keep a secret.

It is well that the power of the Prime Minister, which might run the risk of losing its head over triumphs of eloquence and popular plaudits, should take a rest, so to speak, and cool down amid deliberations that have no echo. That noisy force which breaks out in popular gatherings and carries away the multitude by the power of eloquence is not enough for statesmen ; they have need also of a latent force, derived from all that represents national interests and national grandeur in their most august and most unalterable form. The power of the Prime Minister is a conquest that must be defended unceasingly ; he must not only overcome his political enemies but he must get the better of his friends, their underground broils and jealousies. Royalty serves him as a sort of invisible coat-of-mail ; royalty towers aloft to more tranquil heights. Itself without covetous desires, it can allay covetousness ; without hates, it can heal hatred. We must suppose it to be what it is.

to-day, honest, sincere, true to the nation ; in that case, its mere presence has the gift not only of restraining ambition but of elevating and purifying it.

Even should it pass for a while into unworthy hands, English royalty is no longer capable of successfully opposing parliamentary sovereignty. The positive rights with which it is still armed, the right of dissolving parliament and creating new peers, can be exercised only with the coöperation of the cabinet, and the cabinet is derived from the House and can not dispense with its coöperation. In a grave crisis, the prime minister can dissolve an opposing House and appeal to the country ; but there is complete electoral liberty, there is no administration that could corrupt, intimidate, or cheat the electors ; the country will always have the last word. Everything bends at last before it, ministers, peers, the monarchy.

Party organization can be strong only in a country where the State itself is not organized as a party, and parliamentary government can not go on without party organization. By party organization, I mean the faculty that men pursuing the same political object have of forming themselves into groups, uniting, establishing journals, propagating their doctrines in public meetings, keeping up an incessant but peaceable agitation. A party is like an army, having its general-staff, its rank and file, its treasury ; the State does not interfere in the contest ; it does not turn its functionaries into election agents. When it submits certain questions to the country, it does not attempt to answer them in advance. We shall look in vain for the

State outside of London ; the lord-lieutenant and sheriff are notables rather than functionaries.

The surface of the kingdom is covered by a thousand local governments, parishes, corporations, counties ; aristocracy, wealth, land, the clérgy are the only powers visible in the county. All that we in France call the administration belongs to them. When an election contest begins, the two parties, always ready, muster in all their forces. In a thousand ways and in a thousand places they seek to excite and arouse the voters. While the duel lasts, the State has but one mission : to maintain order. Defamation of public men and ministers has no other bridle than the common law ; anger, envy, injustice, and hatred are turned loose. These tempests alarm nobody, they seem as inevitable as the equinoctial winds. In power or out of power, the parties keep up their propaganda, work upon public opinion. Politics display a sort of theological fervor ; the expression does not evoke abhorrence, as in Latin countries. Politics overrun everything ; they sit by the domestic hearth, at table, they insinuate themselves into books, their breath pervades everything. They are not disjoined from political economy, administration, the science of finance, as though they were something low and impure. Women are none the less women for having their opinion. The affairs of State are not the monopoly of a class of vendors of oaths and traders in eloquence. There are not two countries within the country, the one living by politics, the other submitting to politics, but holding itself aloof in disdain or disgust. A man is expected to take a deep and

passionate interest in public affairs and the public weal ; party spirit is not looked upon as dangerous to the state, but as a condition *sine qua non* of free government. It is not enough to say : I wish to serve the country, but : With whom do you wish to serve it ?

Such habits not only insure the most complete electoral freedom, but the nation is so pervaded and saturated with politics that an election expresses the national will in an almost perfect manner. It is not a sort of unforeseen sally, it issues from the electoral body as the fruit issues from the tree. We must always keep this truth before our eyes, in order that we may not be astonished by parliamentary omnipotence ; the sovereignty of the House is not superimposed, as it were, upon that of the nation, it is expressed from it. Nothing henceforth acts upon it as a restraint ; politicians live in public opinion, like salamanders in the fire. There is not a legislative measure that is not discussed, commented upon, amended, and criticised from one end of the country to the other. Parliaments are but the registering clerks of the national will, or rather there is a constant circulation of will between principal and agent, between the people and its representatives. Parliament acts upon the nation, the nation upon parliament. It is useless to decree that instructions are binding, when the nation is careless, indolent and ignorant. It is superfluous, when attention to political matters is unremitting and universal, when politics become, so to speak, a part of national hygiene.

## IV.

There is no constitution, no written charter defining the powers of parliament. These powers have no precise limit ; they are of all sorts, religious, legislative, judicial, administrative.

The present constitution of the Church of England dates back to the first years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth ; it took up one entire session of parliament. Canonical and liturgical laws were passed like other laws ; they were sent, as usual, from the Commons to the Lords. Two peers and five prelates voted against the spiritual supremacy of the Queen and the absolute exclusion of the spiritual supremacy of "every foreign prince and prelate." By a majority of votes, the prayer-book of Edward VI. was restored, with a few alterations, and heavy penalties imposed upon all who should attack the new liturgy. Parliament is not an ecumenical council, yet transubstantiation was the doctrine of the church until parliament abolished it. What put an end to the celibacy of priests ? Parliament. The church being national, it is perforce subject to the legislative power. The church loves to consider its doctrine as a direct inheritance from the apostles, a trust handed down from age to age ; but the church can not be regarded as a simple apostolic family, it demands too much of the State and civil society. It possesses privileges ; has a direct share in legislative authority, inas-



much as its bishops have a seat in the Upper House ; plays an important part in parish administration (and the constitution of the parishes has only been shaken by the reform of the Poor-Law) ; both in fact and in theory, the parishes still continue to be the centres of provincial administration.

What is the state of the law as touching the Anglican Church? 1st. The law permitted a great number of endowments to be appropriated to religious uses? 2d. Permitted the Anglican clergy to keep these endowments upon condition of fulfilling certain duties. 3d. It subjected the clergy to a particular form of worship, to the doctrines of the Prayer Book and the Thirty-Nine articles. 4th. It permits the bishops to sit in the House of Lords. 5th. It permits them to hold ecclesiastical courts, subject to appeal, however, to the Privy Council. 6th. It authorizes the meetings of an ecclesiastical assembly called the Convocation, which assembly may discuss certain matters and, with the aid and consent of parliament, may take a subordinate part in legislation. Parliament, which has given to the church its dogmas, its constitution, its privileges, and its wealth, may modify its own work. It has already done away with the Establishment in Ireland and restored the church to the sphere of the common law. There is no doubt but that it might loosen one by one the ties that unite Church and State even in England.

As to administration, we cannot say that it is altogether in the hands of parliament, for the counties, towns, and parishes still have very extensive administrative powers.

But nothing stands between, so to speak, parliament and this multitude of isolated, independent, incoherent bodies. There are no all-powerful administrative bodies forming a sort of State within the State. There is no sharp dividing line between administration and policy. Were the cabinet reduced to a purely political ministry, there would not be room enough for party ambition, there would be no way of recompensing services; the inferior bureaux are the lower rounds by which young talents and new reputations can climb. A cabinet reduced to a small number of indispensable men would be confronted by a skilled administration out of the reach of political storms and much more preoccupied in escaping from the control of the Commons whenever their chiefs should no longer form a part of parliament. As it is, these latter serve as the living bond of union between the varying will of the nation and that tenacious and traditional will which is deep-rooted in every bureaucracy.

To place by the side of ministers directors of the great branches of administration would be repugnant to the spirit of the English parliament. These personages, accustomed to the respectful attention and the quiet of their bureaux, would be swept away like dead leaves by the storms of the Commons. Their technical eloquence would give way before the nimble dialectics and the sarcasms of the oratorical gladiators. They would detest the House, and the House would despise them. The ministers, whose lot is always uncertain, would sacrifice them without mercy. It is the especial function of the *little ministers* to propitiate

in time the wrath of the House. They are veritable scapegoats, shielding both the ministry and the bureaux. When the Poor Laws were reformed, an attempt was made to entrust the direction of public aids and charities to a purely administrative commission. The "three kings of Somerset House" had but a short reign; they had many enemies in parliament and not one official defender. The commission was dissolved and this department is now under the direction of a minister.

The administration is not spoken of in England as a body distinct from the political body. The word is used in an altogether different sense. People say "Lord Palmerston's administration," meaning "Lord Palmerston's Cabinet." In fact, the cabinet and the House represented by the cabinet are the veritable administration. There will be nothing to fear from the bureaucratic spirit as long as it is under the domination of the political spirit of parliament. Everything relating to public education, charities, taxes, may be centralized more than it is; but as long as the legislative power continues to be the prime motor of the State and the soul of the government, centralization, being closely united to law, will respect its forms and guarantees and will not become an instrument of oppression. Parliament can change everything; it can wipe out the feudal boundaries of the parishes, abolish the Corporation of the city of London, substitute prefects for lords-lieutenants, reform Oxford, Cambridge, and the public schools. Local barriers and ancient constructions subsist only by its sufferance. But its conservative instinct teaches it that it

must not transfer to others its universal right of reform. The Lords themselves feel this ; they concede one reform only to preserve the right of preventing another.

There is no more centralized country than England, in this sense, that there is one central will that can do and undo everything, that embraces everything and is unfettered, that modifies itself freely from age to age, from generation to generation, from year to year, without ceasing to be sovereign. This will is sparing of its efforts, like a skillful workman who expends no more force than is necessary to obtain a certain effect. It does only what is necessary, and leaves undisturbed all these petty centres where, well or ill, social, political, and religious wants are attended to. It lets everything live that has life, everything last that can last. The Englishman takes no pleasure in destruction. The Lord Chancellor is still the *cancellarius*, the keeper of the king's conscience ; he is the supreme representative of that equitable jurisdiction, a relic of barbarian times, whereby the king himself mitigated or set aside judgment. He nominates to livings and convokes parliament ; he is the natural guardian of minors and aliens ; he combines in his person the three powers : the judicial, as a magistrate ; the executive, as a member of the Cabinet and special representative of the king ; the representative, as presiding officer of the Lords. When its privileges are in question, the House of Commons claims, and has claimed for a long time, the right of administering justice itself, without the interference of the ordinary courts. It has incarcerated men upon a mere order and without alleging the grounds

of arrest. Sir Francis Burdett was arrested and sent to the Tower, in 1810, by order of parliament. The Commons can impeach and try before the House of Lords, converted into a supreme court, not merely ministers but all officers of the crown. For instance, the trial of Warren Hastings. In these state trials, the Commons are represented by three accusers ; in the case of Warren Hastings, they were Burke, Fox, and Sheridan. The last trial of this kind was, in the present century, that of Lord Melville, accused of malversation.

The judicial prerogative of parliament is a weapon that has lost its edge ; we can scarcely speak to-day of privileges of parliament, for the humblest citizen of England enjoys liberty of speech and person. The precautions for defending members against royal authority have long been superfluous. Hence, every time that the Commons have tried to claim excessive privileges, the nation and the sense of justice of the country have rejected the claim. The Commons had to yield in their attempt to prevent printers from publishing their debates or to deprive citizens of the benefit of habeas corpus and the protection of the ordinary courts. Wheeble, a printer, was cited before the Commons, in 1771, to answer for the publication of parliamentary debates ; he refused to appear. The House offered a reward of fifty pounds for his arrest. Wilkes, then an alderman exercising judicial functions at Guildhall, acquitted the printer. Another printer brought an action against the House-messenger who was charged with his arrest. Wilkes and Oliver sentenced the messenger to give bail.

The ministry threw Oliver in the Tower, and shortly after, the Lord Mayor, Crosby. The judges refused to interfere between the House and the city magistrates, and the latter remained in prison until the close of the session. Since then, the newspapers have published parliamentary proceedings unmolested. Nothing remains of these trials but the memory of them. The Commons would now hesitate a long while before pursuing a pamphleteer or an orator for contempt of privilege. Defamation of the House or one of its members can be punished by the King's Bench, like every other libel.

It should be carefully noted that, whenever the Commons have abandoned any one of their ancient rights, they have done so in favor of the judicial rather than the executive power. The executive power is still parliament, for it is only a delegation from parliament. But it has happened frequently that the Commons make some concession to the judicial power, which exists outside of and above parties. Thus parliament has instituted a special court for divorce-cases. It has decided recently that it would no longer examine into elections contested on the ground of corruption or violence, but refer the examination to the judges, thereby abandoning a valuable privilege and one over which every political assembly watches jealously. It even thinks seriously of modifying the entire system of so-called *private* bills. At the beginning of each session, a number of committees are appointed, whose principal office is to report upon all demands for concessions. These committees really sit like so many tribunals. Railway companies, dock



and harbor companies, companies competing for supplying cities with gas, water, and drainage, appear before these committees with their witnesses and their counsel, called *parliamentary advocates*. The inquiry, instead of being based upon the reports of engineers, like the system of our learned *conseils des mines et des ponts et chaussées*, is conducted by testimony and cross-questioning. Parliament has been struck by the evils of this system. In the first place, it is very expensive ; it is not uncommon for a railway company to spend forty, fifty, sixty thousand pounds on the inquest. If the work is to be done in Cork harbor, for instance, the examination is not conducted on the spot, but in London, and the witnesses must be brought there at a heavy expense. The cost of getting bills through parliament has been a great tax upon the English railroads. As the railway system represents a capital of three hundred millions sterling, we can estimate the magnitude of the interests discussed before the House committees. The judges in these parliamentary tribunals are often ignorant and inexperienced ; the engineers overwhelm them with science and the advocates with argument. Every question must be treated *ab ovo*. The jurisprudence of these numerous and changeable committees is necessarily uncertain and shifting. It has to be revised often by the standing judicial committee of the House of Lords, acting as a court of appeals. The committees are so loaded down with business and work so slowly that it has become necessary to give the Board of Trade authority to grant provisional orders for great public works. Parliament, of course, can

confirm or invalidate these orders, and persons interested can petition parliament to have proceedings stayed. The plan has been proposed of referring all private bills to some regular court outside of parliament, but there is no agreement of opinion as to the composition and jurisdiction of such a tribunal. Should it be made up solely of judges and lawyers? Or should they be associated with engineers and financiers? Be that as it may, parliament seems quite ready to give up its ancient authority in the matter of grants, but only to such judges as shall be independent of the crown and the government of the day.

## V.

It is a common mistake to suppose that parliamentary government is necessarily free government. The history of the Convention shows that an assembly may become the most odious and most unmerciful tyrant, because all sense of responsibility is lost. Is there anything more deplorable than so many attempts at parliamentary government ending only in more or less hypocritical dictatorships? A House may, like a sovereign, become arbitrary, violent, infatuated, obstinate, capricious, wild. What is the most powerful check upon parliamentary omnipotence in England? Not the royal prerogative, not the House of Lords, but rather judicial authority. I have already shown how parliament is stripping itself of its attributes in favor of the judicial, not the executive power. More than this;

judicial authority fixes the place of each political organism and checks every aberration ; it serves as the *ne plus ultra* of whatever exercises public authority. The Court of Queen's Bench is a fourth power in the State ; it has the right of control, and prevents every usurpation, whether by the crown, or by the ministry, or by state officials, or by local officials. It took cognizance of the dispute between James II. and the seven bishops, and history must give this much credit to the king, that he did not dream of interfering with the course of justice in this celebrated case where his own crown was at stake. The jury was impaneled as usual. What is the meaning of this institution, the jury, as sacred as parliament itself? It means that the nation, while delegating all its powers, has reserved for itself the right of punishing. The merchants who give their verdict (*vere dictum*) are the descendants of those barbarian warriors who administered justice and deposed kings.

"The pure and impartial administration of justice," says Junius in his letter of January twenty-first, 1769, "is perhaps the firmest bond to secure a cheerful submission of the people, and to engage their affections to government. It is not sufficient that questions of private right or wrong are justly decided, nor that judges are superior to the vileness of pecuniary corruption. Jeffries himself, when the court had no interest, was an upright judge. A judge under the influence of government may be honest enough in the decision of private causes, yet a traitor to the public." How are the English judges screened from the influence

of the government? How is it that justice has become the supreme power, the chief regulator in the state? Those who make the law generally look upon themselves as above the law; in England, the legislator takes more glory in the respect paid to the law than in the power which he has of changing the law. Who has violated the law most frequently in France, kings or assemblies? Our history is full of the outrages committed upon the law, first by the absolute monarchy and then by revolutionary governments. It was in France that the word was uttered, "We are dying of legality."\*

The Duc de Broglie says, in his work on *The Government of France*, "We count our judges by hundreds and thousands. Hence it is that we cannot have, like our neighbors, a body composed of men of the first order and consummate jurisconsults." That judicial authority in England is so powerful, comes from there being so few judges. Three courts alone represent the ancient court of the king, the *aula regia*, viz. King's (Queen's) Bench, more especially charged with criminal causes, the Exchequer, for fiscal matters, Common Pleas, for ordinary civil suits. Each court has only five judges, so that fifteen judges, by their civil and criminal assizes, are the dispensers of justice for almost all Britain. To these Common Law Courts, however, must be added the Court of Equity, which supplements the common law and makes good its defects, by creating a sort of organic, ever-growing law that proceeds from the individual conscience

† *La légalité nous tue.*

of the judge. There are very few judges, then ; they have not their peers ; they shine with majesty borrowed from that of royalty itself, their dignity is as stable as that of the hereditary lawgivers. George III., on ascending the throne, decided that the justices' commissions should not expire with the death of the sovereign. Their salaries are paid out of the civil list, and consequently are not discussed in parliament every year, inasmuch as the civil list is fixed for the duration of the reign. The Lord Chancellor, who is Minister of Justice and presiding officer of the House of Lords as well as judge, receives five hundred thousand francs per annum, the Chief Justice of Queen's Bench two hundred thousand, the Chief Justice of Common Pleas and the Lord Chief Baron one hundred and seventy-five thousand. The other judges receive one hundred and twenty-five thousand each. They are already rich on ascending the bench, for none but the most renowned and successful lawyers are chosen. The judge, then, has no favors to ask of the crown or the ministry ; he is not afraid of falling nor of not rising. If he is desirous of fame, he can obtain it only through his impartiality ; if his name is handed to posterity, it is only because he has become the symbol of equity and his acute intellect has expressed most exactly and most felicitously the sense of that mass of documents and rules called the law. He must represent something impersonal, continuity amid the discontinuity of human actions, the past amid the heaving passions of the present.

It is very natural that the judicial power, raised in

the shadow of the crown and representing the rights of society as against individual passion, should have continued long to be, even in an aristocratic country, the jealous defender of the rights of royalty. Lord Mansfield, Lord Thurlow, Lord Loughborough, Lord Eldon, Lord Ellenborough were allies of the court. Lord Mansfield and Lord Ellenborough were even taken into the cabinet, becoming agents of the executive power. Lord Mansfield tried to restrict the right of the jury in suits for libel against the press to a simple finding of the facts. Not only did he draw upon himself the wrath of Junius, but another judge was found to combat this opinion, Lord Camden. This latter showed that it is impossible to separate absolutely matters of fact from matters of law, that the jury that ascertains in murder the degree of malice, and in robbery the degree of felony, must also inquire in a libel-case into the culpable intent. Lord Camden had the best of it, and Fox's Bill, in 1791, became the safeguard of the liberty of the press.

Parliament is only one of the workmen at work on the edifice of the law. By the side of the written law, made on the spur of the moment, there is another law, the child of time and custom, slowly developed from the conscience and the brain of the judges. In nearly every instance it has been a suit or a trial that has established most firmly and most conspicuously the lasting conquests of liberty. For political theories do not move the heart of a nation so readily as such a drama, in which she sees the actors before her, either to love or to abhor them. Moreover,



the English mind is disposed to venerate whatever is powerful. Now the legislator only confers power upon men and things, he does not touch directly, with his own hand, the lives and fortunes of citizens. Hence he seems less formidable and grand than the judge.

Who was the first to decide that every slave on touching English soil becomes free? Lord Mansfield, in the case of a negro seized on a ship in the Thames. Who taught the Whigs tolerance? The magistrates. They mitigated the operation of unjust laws against Catholics and Dissenters. The legal mind, accustomed to be guided by reason, is not given to fanaticism. Lord Mansfield, the strict conservative, the jealous guardian of the rights of ancient authority, was a protector of the Dissenters. He condemned the Corporation of the city of London, that had imposed fines upon the sheriffs whom it had appointed and who could not exercise their functions because of non-conformity to Anglican rites. It is not a crime, said he to the House of Lords sitting as a court of appeals, for a man to say that he is a Dissenter, it is not a crime for him not to commune according to the rites of the Church of England ; it would be a crime for him to do so contrary to the dictates of conscience (1767). It was the Court of Chancery that protected the chapels and real estate of the Dissenting sects (1844). Is it necessary to recall all that the judges have done for a liberty as precious as that of conscience, for personal liberty? Until the reign of George III., arrests might be made upon so-called *general warrants*, that did not even designate by name the

persons suspected. When the forty-fifth number of Wilkes's journal, the *North Briton*, appeared, Lord Halifax caused forty-five persons to be arrested. In 1762, the Chief Justice of King's Bench pronounced these general warrants illegal, and sentenced the agents of the government to heavy damages. Wilkes, who had been arrested for a moment, recovered one hundred thousand francs. The courts even prohibited the sweeping seizure of all the papers of a subject of the king ; the search-warrants must specify distinctly the papers to be searched for, and only such papers and no others can be seized. The dwelling of a citizen should not be pillaged. Lord Camden lays down this doctrine in 1765, in the court of Common Pleas.

The Commons did not interfere in the way of legislation in these famous litigations. While the decision relative to the general warrants was still pending, the Attorney General said boldly that he "paid no more attention to the resolutions of the Commons than if they had been so many drunken porters' oaths." The resolutions of the House of Commons, in fact, are only expressions of opinion, without legal authority. The Commons do not claim the right of altering a law while it is undergoing judicial interpretation and application ; they cannot confer upon a new law retroactive force. The nation represented in parliament does not defy the nation represented in the jury-box. Thus the judge finds himself raised for months, often for years, to a sort of Mount Sinai, high above the makers of the law and attracting the gaze of the entire nation.

The prestige of the judges is not due exclusively to this

august role ; it is not enough that their wisdom guides the uninformed conscience of juries and leads them to the truth, that their decisions become axioms handed down from age to age. The magistrate becomes a legislator without ceasing to be a magistrate. The House of Lords may be either a tribunal or a legislative chamber. Those who have watched longest over the execution of the law are the best correctors of legislation. The moral authority of the judges, then, is almost unlimited. Thanks to them, liberty of conscience, of person, of the press, are not mere words and chimeras ; these sacred rights have become as inviolable as the right of property, as rights purely tangible and material.

The House of Commons is the living expression of national sovereignty. But this sovereignty is not a blind, capricious, childish force, tossing to and fro ; ready to destroy rather than do nothing. Parliament can do anything, but it is content with correcting the work of the past without pretending to renew it from top to bottom. England has yet to make the acquaintance of that baneful doctrine which denies to one generation the right of binding another. Were that doctrine true, not only the political constitution but all the laws would have to be changed incessantly. Moreover, where does one generation end and the next begin ? The House of Commons is the motive power of England, content with overcoming by its patient efforts the resisting forces of tradition, custom, the crown, and the aristocracy. There is always a sort of dynamic equilibrium of all these forces. The English

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Commons have never considered themselves as other than the agents of England's greatness, prosperity and safety. Their sovereignty always halts instinctively before whatever seems to threaten the country.

## CHAPTER V.

### *On the Formation of Political Habits.*

#### I.

IN every free country we must discriminate between two kinds of forces, the constituted and the organic. The former are the front of the edifice, and go by the names of executive, legislative, judicial. The king, the Lords, the Commons, the Privy Council, the Army are the outward and visible agents of national power. But this power is fed and kept up by forces that I call organic because they compose the living frame-work and are not the product of laws but of habits. These forces hold the middle place between the individual and the State ; they form the first degree of organization, so to speak, in the tissue of national will, desires, instincts, hopes, and aspirations. The sovereign and the two Houses remind us of a beautiful fountain bubbling up in the midst of a fair landscape. But the forces of which I speak are the subterranean tubes, the reservoirs and the hydraulic machinery.

Most theorizers upon politics have occupied themselves more with the constituted powers, those powers whose functions may be defined by charter, than with the

inferior powers which have no place in the State but which are, so to speak, the supports of the State. Numerous experiments have shown how useless it is to confer representative institutions upon a nation which, by the operation of religion or politics, has no collective force left but the State. Where men are only a sort of dust scattered hither and thither by chance, where egoism has no restraint but narrow family ties, where society is not traversed in every direction by all sorts of chains and links, self-imposed obligations and servitudes, in such a case the State, whether it be called a king, an emperor, or a parliament, must incline perforce to tyranny.

It is with political as with moral freedom; he is most free who takes voluntarily upon himself the most duties. A people is not free as long as it recognizes no other forces than those of the government, no other restraint than that of the written law. A sovereignty that finds its field of operations only in the periodical and hazardous choice of a few legislators is little more than a nominal sovereignty.

Legislation should be the expression of national wants and wishes; but these wants and wishes will not be anything more than obscure instincts unless they can find throughout the entire surface of the country some expression, some formula, some representation. There are countries in which opinion is organized, so to speak; other countries, in which it remains in an inorganic state. In the former, national will is always in activity and movement, like a healthy body. In the latter, the nation



suffers rather than *wills*, it does not know how to command : the utmost that it can do is to change its masters.

The non-constituted but organic powers that support the entire political superstructure of England are : parties, the press, religious societies or churches, secular societies or corporations of all kinds.

Party spirit is indispensable in a free State, it forms the atmosphere, so to speak, of liberty. It constitutes the first of those numerous subinfeudations without which society relapses into the atomic state. Party spirit is not revolutionary ; in the United States, England, Belgium, Switzerland, wherever habits of freedom exist, the parties are parties of government ; they do not seek to overthrow the constitution but to become its interpreters. They do not proscribe one another but take one another's place.

Government by parties is the highest form of expressing the submission of the minority to the majority. It is possible only in countries where it is an understood thing that the government is made for the people, and not the people for the government. It calls for the most exalted virtues. The self-abnegation that keeps a party together in constitutional opposition, as long as it cannot succeed in convincing the majority, shows devotion to a certain ideal and to political and social traditions, perpetual self-sacrifice. It bridles ambition, spurs up indolence, drills alike the impatient and the sluggish. It unites one generation to another, carries the family spirit into politics. It is a religion that does not banish free inquiry, that tolerates

sects, dissenting churches, apostles of adventure, but scourges hypocrisy and apostacy.

In democratic countries, where the right of suffrage is almost universal, parties have need of some sort of representation, we might almost say, government. In the United States, for instance, a party has its standing committees for each state, county, city, towns.

The party not in power, as well as the party in power, controls an army of volunteer agents. These armies are set in motion whenever it becomes necessary to elect a president, a senator, a representative, or merely a state governor, federal or municipal officers. The lists of candidates are not the work of chance or whim. They are studied out, prepared, and discussed by conventions invested with full and regular powers. These party governments do not hide themselves from sight, but work in the light of day, like the government at Washington. Their proceedings are published in the newspapers, their meetings are open to the public. They have their agents, their orators, their peripatetic apostles, (in the West their *stump* orators), their organs, reviews, platforms. In these great political associations, no doubt, the sharpest wills and the most pushing ambitions have the chief place. Still these wills and ambitions must keep to certain general ideas, must work for others, and can not turn everything to their own profit.

In England, party organization is not so complex, the government having been for so long a period almost purely aristocratic. Even at the present day, what we

might term the political *personnel* of England is not so numerous as to call for party organization outside of parliament. Family spirit has long remained the most solid link in party spirit, traditions go hand in hand with ancient manors. There are certain names that can not be uttered without evoking a world of reminiscences. It rarely happens that the representatives of certain families do not accept a role that is somewhat impersonal. Hereditary succession transmits and developes certain ruling instincts, makes some families liberal, others conservative. Even were it otherwise, it is harder to defy the dead than the living, harder to contradict one's ancestors than one's adversaries. This fidelity to the past is not servitude, but we should not err much from the truth in saying that party spirit is almost hereditary. Young men destined for public life are classified and assigned to their regiments from the start. They recognize their chiefs and accept their leaders. A daring, prophetic genius will break loose from every rule and break down every obstacle. But the world is not peopled with geniuses.

After the family, society is the strongest bond of party spirit. In no country have politics been permeated so thoroughly with the spirit of the world as in England. The governing classes are at the same time the polite, lettered, elegant classes, setting the fashion.

Not to wear the colors of one's party would be in as bad taste as not to be well dressed. Young ladies know on which side of the house their partners in the dance will sit. We can not enter a parlor without finding poli-

tics side by side with pleasure. They have their place everywhere, at table, at the ball, at the country-seat ; the atmosphere is saturated with politics. The result is that the virtues of polite society have been carried into public life, such as trustworthiness, secrecy, reserve, courtesy, respect. There is no severer code than that of the world ; it exacts probity of speech if not of heart, a sustained mastery over anger, hatred, envy, all the noble and ignoble passions by which we are incessantly agitated. The more exalted a party, the more strictly it is held to the exercise of such a mastery. The party-chief must become in a measure impersonal, must restrain himself continually, sacrifice his private animosities, recollections and dislikes. He must never, by his own mental superiority, crush out mediocrity, stupidity and incapacity ; his originality must stand the pelting shower of common-places. His predominant quality is character ; his words amount almost to acts, he measures them. He must inspire both friends and foes with confidence ; he represents the typical gentleman, that is to say, the *true* man, in politics.

I am depicting an ideal. But is it not a great deal that this ideal should be so high ? The party is dominated, from one end to the other, by this spirit of submission to a common cause ; the individuals regard themselves rather as servants than as masters. In the highest spheres, people do not feed upon power as if it were a prey ; they look upon it as a means quite as much as an end. Power is not worn like an idle decoration.

It is not wealth nor even high rank that brings about

this disinterestedness, for we do not see them triumphing in other countries over excessive ambition ; but it is a certain natural *hauteur* making a man regard himself as always superior to his works and unable to take complete satisfaction in them, and also a sort of collective spirit, which is called in church matters the sectarian spirit, but which has not as yet any accurate name in politics.

## II.

The press is perhaps the most powerful party agent ; it is the representative of ideal, impersonal, traditional forces. The English newspaper exercises a sort of royalty to which there is neither regency nor minority. The journalist is wrapped in mystery much denser than that of constitutional fictions. Unknown, his voice resounds throughout England and often throughout the world. He lives as it were in a tomb ; but do not Shakespeare and Milton from the tomb still charm mankind ? The newspaper does not charm men, but it instructs them. It is the shopkeeper of information and facts ; it carries the reader's mind in a twinkling to the four corners of the globe ; it opens to the humble artisan every day new and boundless horizons, carries him to distant battle-fields, amid tempests, into kingly palaces, into all the great assemblages of men, to the prison and the hospital, and from the facts it draws day by day the lesson. It compares general ideas, drags man out of his ennui and isolation and throws open to him the

world, makes him better by pointing out to him the concatenation of events, firing his zeal for things indifferent to him, and furnishing him with unselfish cares. What art, what patience, what ingenuity there must be in this new Scheherazade that no longer counts by nights but must forever charm her master ! She has not to invent anything, neither does she merely recite events ; she is always extracting from them some political moral. She is giving a lesson that has neither beginning nor end. She has taken upon herself the office of the ancient chorus.

This impersonal character of the press is, at the present day, the real sign of its power. The writer is lost in the work. This was not the case when the newspaper was a small sheet, an individual and literary enterprise. Without fortune, without rank, Addison was sent to the House of Commons and became Under Secretary of State.

We are still where England was in the last century. The journals of the continent remind one of those small country inns where the fare is generally good enough and the hostess chatty, but where there is an absence of almost everything that we should like to have. The English journal, on the contrary, is like some great hotel where we have only to order what we want and the servants are very attentive but say nothing.

Journalists are the hidden advocates of a cause ; they write to be read and not to make themselves known ; the interests of their party are the only thing that they have to be careful of. They treat on equal terms with the highest powers, because they treat in the name of certain ideas, cer-



tain doctrines and traditions. They are like actors playing the part of kings better than the kings themselves. Abroad, their representatives are ambassadors, not accredited, but almost as powerful and often more active than the real ambassadors. One might suppose that in a country of absolute liberty there must be a great many papers. Not so. It is only when politics become personal that newspapers multiply. The journalist is then a General wishing to command and no longer willing to obey. In revolutionary countries there is an incessant vegetation of ambitions, each one of which buds into a journal. Each orator, each intriguer, each coxcomb must have his organ. Freedom of the press degenerates into a gladiatorial pell-mell or still worse, into a fight among actors. In countries that have long been free, newspapers are strong and permanent enterprises, kept up from generation to generation, changing only gradually and not making unexpected and daring sallies upon popularity. The English journal is no place for romance, gossip, or mere frivolity. It is a powerful political and commercial machine, all iron and steel, dispensing with useless ornament. To construct such a machine, much time and immense capital are necessary. This is why there are so few great journals. What is there left to read, after we have read the *Times* and two or three others? We need not be apprehensive even of becoming subjected gradually to opinions too uniform and too narrow. At first, newspapers were merely party organs, but at the present day, some are so powerful that they can read all parties a lesson. They represent a new

function in the State : political criticism. Statesmen, from the very moment they get into office, run the risk of losing a portion of their moral power; the journal, only a witness, never loses its power. It watches over parties, arouses and touches among men in office that point of honor which prevents them from continuing to govern when they are no longer sustained by public opinion. It is always sounding public opinion, and becomes the echo of those muffled wishes that have no direct voice in parliament and the administration. The press is after a fashion a barometer, marking accurately the fluctuations, the movements, the anxieties, the gradual changes in the national mind. Just as our thoughts escaping from their limbo and fixing themselves in words become clearer to themselves, so opinion, which is thought myriad-minded and national, seeks and finds itself continually in the printed word, the newspaper. What conversation does in the family, the press does in the nation : it brings about shocks and collisions, but also explanations, understandings, general harmony and intercourse. We cannot conceive of a real parliamentary government, that is, a government of persuasion, without the coöperation of a sober, watchful press, keeping the mind of the nation fixed upon general matters. There is not in England a man so rude as not to have some ideas about politics, some respect for speech, for law and reason, some relish for courteous and loyal contest, for the free play of human energy and intelligence.

New ideas and doctrines do not spread in a free country like widening circles in the water that start from a centre

of movement. They are propagated rather as one liquid is gradually diffused in another. We do not see and often we do not know by what channels they make their way, nor even where they start from. The political atmosphere is changed gradually, so that in a few years it is entirely renewed. Even those who, from temperament, preconceived resolve, or interest, proclaim themselves most attached to old ideas, are under the influence of the new, before they are aware of it; they make use of the new phraseology before they have entered into its spirit. We see continually instances of this diffusion of ideas, which, by reason of the habit of discussion, the press, and the political character of the race, is a quick and almost irresistible process. Let us take up a few examples. I shall select, if you will, the colonial policy of England. Formerly, and even at the beginning of this century, Great Britain considered each one of its colonies as a fortress to be defended at every cost; their soil was as sacred as that of England itself. To extend, multiply and defend them, was the statesman's first duty. Men-of-war were so many floating bridges uniting an immense territory of which the British Isles were only the centre. They did not stop short of the conquest of a country like India; a handful of Europeans took upon themselves to rule over millions of men. We know with what desperation England struggled to retain her American colonies and how, even at this day, she can scarcely forgive the United States for preferring independence to the honor of belonging to Great Britain. Still, the lesson administered by America was not lost. By a sort of a

tacit understanding, the colonies were divided into two classes. Some were regarded as vast dependencies, from which England was to derive as much wealth as possible without establishing her children, her laws, her institutions, without making them thoroughly her own. The others, thrown open to a steady emigration, were regarded as entitled to legislative independence and a sort of autonomy. Wherever a Saxon population established itself, it brought with it its lares and penates, its institutions. It accepted from the mother country only the representative of executive power, and, in return, the mother country protected it from attack.

Under the protecting shadow of this regime, which is both independence and solidarity, the Australian colonies have taken their wonderful start. Canada (it was Pitt who permitted the two Canadas to have parliaments of their own choice, and, French Canada being Catholic, this was emancipating Catholics abroad before they were emancipated at home), Canada enjoys a degree of prosperity scarcely surpassed by that of her powerful neighbors. And yet public opinion has slowly disengaged itself from this system. We scarcely know to whom to attribute the change ; it is due less to men than to the propaganda of political economy. There is a certain school that examines the relations between the mother country and the colonies only from the debit and credit point of view. This colony cost us more than it yields. Another makes use of its legislative independence to vote a protective tariff and exclude our manufactures. The necessity of protecting our establishments

all over the globe against any and every attack obliges us to keep a military and naval establishment ruinous to our finances. Our protection, for all it is distant and inefficient, serves none the less to suppress in the colonies that manly feeling which is engendered when people know that they have none to rely upon but themselves. Commerce, free trade, these are the best means of preserving the friendship of so many far-away populations. Our authority over them can not but be either tyrannical or nominal, we do not wish it to be tyrannical. And if nominal, of what good can it be to us? It becomes to us a fetter, a source of embarrassment, a constant preoccupation. We have always some war on our hands, to-day in India, to-morrow at the Cape, in China, or in New Zealand. The burden of our responsibilities is too overwhelming. The blood shed by a brutal Jamaica Governor recoils directly upon our heads. We sign treaties that dismember provinces scarcely known to the most learned members of the Geographical Society.

Even Sir Robert Peel could hold such language in private intercourse. With what pride, what hauteur it was denounced by the representatives of Old England when the radicals first formulated it timidly! England reduced within her narrow isle to the role of a banker of the human race, a sort of peaceable Holland, fat, silent, without a voice in the management of human affairs! How could such an ignoble idea be conceived? Grave responsibilities, increasing care for the morrow, the constant struggle against chance and hydra-headed difficulties, ambitious ardor that never tires, have they not

greatened the character of the race? Should the cares of commerce suffice it? Has its lofty primacy, which is an element of its strength, been merely the offspring of a few obscure trading offices? But this proud language is now seldom heard. Political economists and radicals find the protection accorded by England to the colonies too burdensome, they are ready to sever the umbilical cord uniting the colonies with the mother country. They would be content to live with them on the footing of free trade; devoted to the peace-policy, they are in search of friends rather than allies, and are satisfied if the colonies will only cherish some distant sympathy for England.

The English press is ever busy with these great questions; it is preparing the country with unconscious art for all necessary sacrifices; it feels both the movements of pride in a patrician race and the promptings of patriotic prudence that shuns useless and dangerous conflicts.

In this way alone, by the slow and obscure action of public opinion, peace and non-intervention have become the poles of the foreign policy of the country. With Lord Palmerston was buried that ancient policy which had founded, we must admit, the greatness of England, and which, blending with infinite art, prudence, and boldness, had never shrunk from violence or fraud. This policy gave great value to an alliance with England. Throwing its weight at an opportune moment on one side or the other, England had succeeded in gaining the appearance of holding the balance of power. What



victories it could not win with its own hands it bought with its subsidies ; it humiliated its allies at the same time that it overcame its enemies.

The victory of Waterloo set an unhopèd-for crown upon this policy ; the plenary and insolent enjoyment of its fruits lasted until the Crimean war. But upon that distant peninsula, fighting by the side of and under the protection, as it were, of its ancient enemy, England saw its prestige diminishing. Its army was numbered ; people admired its valor and pitied its organization. Since that time, England has gradually retired from the front of military policy ; it has assumed an attitude more on the defensive. It still makes its voice heard in the disputes of Europe, and sometimes its statesmen indulge in outbursts of pride and eloquence against European governments and peoples. But the remonstrances are no longer listened to with the same attention ; even those who make them know that they cannot dispose of England as they would. Diplomatic action, having lost its sanction, is afraid of seeming a *telum imbellè sine ictu*. London is no longer the pole of European politics. Given up to its commerce and industry, rolling in wealth yet grimy with the labor of feeding itself, England devotes itself more and more to peace. Its little army, admirable in so many respects, still costs it a mint of money ; efforts are made to reorganize and increase it, but what a figure would it make by the side of those peoples in arms that the spirit of conquest has raised all over the continent ?

Nevertheless England must needs make some show

among the great powers. For centuries it labored to establish and maintain the balance of power in Europe ; its name stands at the foot of a number of treaties. But it would seem that it no longer courts the primacy, or at least that it no longer dreads the primacy of other powers. In proportion as it has realized that it could no longer cope on the continent with great military powers, it has adopted a more peaceful policy ; it has adjusted its policy to new principles. The mercantile spirit of the bourgeois classes, ever encroaching upon the aristocracy, favors the change. This spirit has more respect for power wherever it is displayed and is little disposed to cope with it. The bourgeoisie knows that the astonishing prosperity of the country is in a great measure artificial ; it is afraid of commercial crises, accidents, and risks. During the civil war in the United States, England sacrificed to her passion the rights of maritime belligerents, those rights for which she had once fought so terribly. She exulted in the sight of a few corsairs, escaped from her ports, sweeping American commerce from the seas. But since then, she has been haunted by the recollection of the *Alabama* ; she has asked herself the question,—too late,—what would happen if she should have a war on her hands and all at once vessels should run out of the ports of some neutral power, justified by the precedents she herself has furnished, and proceed to hunt her down. The golden statue of English Mammon has feet of clay. Suppose for a moment that her commerce were ruined ; it would be no ordinary ruin, it would be famine. What would become of her living machines,

her workmen who work for the whole world? What would become of the ancient constitution, the balance of parties? Fictions!

The recollection of the Alabama has been the invisible but all-powerful curb restraining English policy from pursuing a less humble, less disinterested policy. Of what matter to England were the shifting phases of European politics, the petty German sovereignties, Prussia, Austria, and the Rhine frontier, and even the Eastern question itself, in comparison with the risks to be incurred by a maritime war?

The press is the power that agitates these great currents, this flood and ebb of opinion that is slowly displacing the ideas and even the instincts of Old England. The press commits grave mistakes at times; but they are, so to speak, the mistakes of the nation, and once committed, the press always endeavors to correct the effects. By reason of its impersonal character, it can change more easily than statesmen can, who are fettered by their personal vanity. It is freer to adapt itself to facts and circumstances, to humble and contradict itself. It is satisfied if it discovers and serves the interests of England; it can not abase itself, so to speak, as long as it pursues these. Its feelers are always out to discover the danger of the hour. It overcomes ancient prejudices, exposes the hollowness of what Bacon called stage-idols. It slowly detaches England from the continent, given over perhaps to a deplorable decline, attaches it more firmly to its own island, turns its eyes to the new worlds where the shoots

of Anglo-Saxon civilization are budding apace. English liberty seems to Europe like a sun hung over the horizon of the sea. The Atlantic is broad and the Channel very narrow, but it is farther from London to Paris than from London to Washington.

The English press had a greater share in the final settlement of the Alabama claims than the statesmen had. The press made it its study to pacify the anger of the United States ; it submitted to, then acquiesced in, finally celebrated the victory of the Union. The most crafty diplomatist could not have succeeded better in concealing his extreme desire to negotiate, or in defending inch by inch a position that he had decided upon abandoning. The press incessantly took up the thread dropped by the ministers. At last the treaty of Washington and the arbitration of Geneva came to put an end to the protracted controversy. England, while seeming to yield, has succeeded in purchasing cheaply its commercial security ; seeming to submit to the rules of international law that are to become hereafter its safeguard, it has regained freedom of action. It is still the rival but it is no longer the enemy of the United States.

The press, anonymous and irresponsible, is not *doctrinaire* ; it has none but shifting hatreds and friendships. It beholds great revolutions going on over the continent without any other emotion than it would have at a play. It likes to regard Europe as a vast field of experiments, and points out to England fasting the spectacle of intoxicated kings and peoples. In its disdain for continental

nations, dashed with vague apprehension, there is something akin to the feelings with which the lofty papacy, enthroned upon the centuries, looks down upon the passing governments, their noisy triumphs and their catastrophes. It applauds in turn revolution and the reactions that ensue ; it would never like to see the continent either too agitated or too quiet. It lectures all the powers : every catastrophe that it has foreseen seems to it to be necessary. It appears satisfied with finding the reason for every event, and even becomes reconciled to what has taken it by surprise and belied its wisdom. It is attached, more from pride than from interest, to the preservation of certain dynasties and states ; but we can detect, even in its protection, a certain amount of indifference and incredulity. The old balance of power in Europe overthrown, England was not long in siding with new Italy, with new Germany ; she is consoled at the sight of the growing greatness of certain powers, provided other powers, that she had long dreaded, seem to her less dangerous. She leaves the dead to follow the living. She disarms fortune by applauding the victor. She is always thinking of herself. And who would blame her therefor ? The press, suspicious, inquisitive, keeps up a perpetual search after the enemies of the country ; it sometimes braves the strong, in order that its praise may have more merit. It bestows its protection on the weak, that the name of England may be blessed. It sets itself up as the moral director of Europe, so to appear purer, nobler to the people of England. Above all else, it labors to preserve intact the faith

that England has in herself, her own superiority, her own foresight, her venerable institutions and doctrines.

What fruit has not a hidden worm? The observer who seeks to study the secret motors of public opinion can not help noticing that English clearsightedness, rarely at fault in matters of domestic policy, is, on the other hand, more frequently and more grossly deceived than in times past upon matters of foreign policy. In vain do active, stirring, intelligent agents and correspondents send home to England a sort of living photograph of the world at large. It would seem as if, the moment England looked beyond herself, her vision became troubled. Invincible egoism, excessive disdain hiding from her the moral forces at work among men, secret dislike for all greatness that has not borrowed from her, everything seems to mislead her. Her empiricism, her mania for observing everything in detail, conceal from her what is clear to others less able. There was a sort of madness, for instance, in her judgments upon the war of secession in America and her prognostications about the fate of the American Union. Nobody knew the events better and nobody understood them worse. If a question arises as to France or Russia, English opinion becomes at times flurried, so to speak, and infatuated. The representatives of parliamentary and constitutional government set themselves up as advisers of *coups d'état*; they worship abroad what they would burn at home; they choose for themselves idols of a day, that they are the first to break. They get up a sort of sham fanaticism, seek to do violence to facts, and deduce



from them things that they do not contain. Their imagination is always trying to knead over history. They get angry at kings, parliaments, peoples, for not following their flattering or threatening prophecies.

### III.

Among the forces that pluck man out of his native egoism and show him something beyond himself, no one is more persistent, without doubt, than the religious sentiment. The churches are in England the school of the citizen. This comes from their being in a state of conflict; the spirit of sect bears some resemblance to the spirit of party in demanding, like the latter, an active zeal, a faith that displays itself in works, an organization of human energy. The Catholic ideal has this admirable trait, that it obliterates all distinctions of race, age, class, rank, government; Catholic unity destroys whatever separates and consequently also whatever groups men; it prostrates them before God as dust, the grains of which do need to know one another. It crushes them with the splendor of its edifices, where they seem lost like insects, it drives their soul from mere earthly paths. Assuredly there is something sublime in a faith that disdains visible triumphs, power, wealth, success. Protestant faith bends the springs of the will to the world; it always seems to be under the necessity, so to speak, of proving to itself its excellence; is less contemplative and more stirring, less

poetic and more reasoning, less mystic and more robust. It gathers men into bundles, groups, petty jealous societies that watch and observe one another and learn how to govern themselves.

All these societies have their rules, their laws, their discipline, their confessions of faith ; no one can be received into them without becoming a combatant. The Great National Church always gets whatever is grandest, most venerable and illustrious, but it lives under the watchful eye of the Dissenting churches, that are half laic and that compel it to emerge continually from its ancient quietude and mingle in mundane matters. It preserves its empire over the hearts of men only upon condition of not remaining insensible to whatever is agitating them. It discusses political problems from afar, as it were, and with hauteur ; but it does not ignore nor despise them ; it makes its power a support of the ancient order of things, of necessary innovations, of progress that is not to be gain-said ; it does not assume toward politics the attitude of a disdainful looker-on, it sends its bishops to the House of Lords, it is present at every ceremony, every civic meeting. It mixes with the people ; it may be seen in the school-room, in the town-hall, on the magistrate's bench ; it sheds some of its rays upon the humble, vulgar, material things of daily life. The official religion becomes one of the forms of the State ; it fills the universities, it encircles and deifies, so to speak, royalty. There are few public dinners where the health of the Church is not drunk after the toasts to the Queen and the royal family.

Canterbury and York have archbishops. There are not less than twenty-six bishops. Every diocese has its archdeacons, its deans, its canons, its prebendaries. There are deans of the chapter, rural deans, provincial deans, deans of the university colleges, honorary deans, and others. By the side of this vast and wealthy hierarchy, the Dissenting churches have theirs too ; they have their churches, their estates, their synods, their annual conferences. The Wesleyan Methodists have more than seven thousand chapels. The primitive Methodists have more than three thousand. The Independents and Baptists, together, more than eight thousand. A number of sects live more isolated, humble but free : the Friends, the Unitarians, the Moravians, the new Wesleyans, the Bible Christians, the Latter Day Saints, the English Presbyterians, the United Presbyterians. The Catholics, now enfranchised, have their convents, their schools, their churches. All these churches, being free, are expected to govern themselves ; they call upon their members for pecuniary sacrifices and disinterested efforts and subject them to voluntary discipline. The more humble the church, the more time, the more zeal, the more devotedness it demands. In the great commercial and manufacturing cities, a *bourgeoisie parvenue* that has grown up in the shadow of long despised sects takes pride in being generous. It pays the highest price for the eloquence of its preachers ; it would fill its temples with riches, did not its very faith object.

The Dissenters have a prominent position in parliament. They bring with them into politics that tenacity, that spirit

of propaganda, that sort of stirring dullness and patient inquietude, that are characteristic of sects. They know how to stir up the people to its depths, how to reach its most muffled and hidden instincts ; they are at once the vanguard and the rear-guard of the liberal party ; they always get and always give the last blows. Social questions, in a country where the constitution has no professed enemies, occupy a predominant position ; religious passions, christianity, philanthropy, are, so to speak, the subsoil of parliament. The High Church, the Low Church, the Free Churches struggle for the leadership ; they aim at being the inspiration of legislation ; they can not, like vulgar politicians, flatter the ignoble passions of the multitude ; they are obliged both to speak to it in the stern accents of morality and to watch over its needs. They thus give a Christian coloring to the laws upon public charities, public education, the regulation of labor, upon health, hygiene, and even to fiscal laws themselves. They think less of making citizens than of making Christians and men. But the civic virtues are the growth of religious germs. Liberty is not only considered a weapon against foes, but it becomes a faith, it imposes duties, it makes life not a perpetual combat but a perpetual labor.

Close contact and free competition among religions are favorable to civic virtue. Who, even among the most fiery Catholics, has not the confused feeling that the French Revolution would not have had such terrible and painful miscarriages, if there had remained, in the face of effete royalty and an aristocracy of courtiers, an old

Huguenot party, a more austere nobility, provincial, proud, and jealous? Saint Bartholomew and the Reign of Terror are accomplices in date. Protestantism has long since ceased to do more than vegetate upon French soil, and the Protestant spirit, that spirit which is neither revolt nor submission, is still wanting in our politics. Man carries with him into public affairs something of his own religious spirit. Italian politics, even when struggling against Rome, display the patience and *finesse* of the Vatican. Revolutions in France are like sins for which the nation consents to do long penance; she punishes herself for her license by abdicating; she goes from the tribune to the despot, from the despot to the tribune.

After religions have ceased to persecute one another, they still continue to watch one another and serve as a mutual check. The Anglican church has always some rival; the little Wesleyan, Presbyterian, or Baptist chapel is never far from the Anglican chapel. Thus England has the advantages both of a state religion and of freedom of worship. The two churches, the Established and the Dissenting, are, from the religious point of view, the counterpart of the Lords and the Commons. The one represents the past, with its abiding reminiscences; the other, the passions and troubles of the present. In Catholic countries, like France, the clergy has no share in civil government or administration, nor has the laity any more in the government of the church. It is quite the reverse in England. The two societies the civil and the religious, are not distinct, so to speak; the priest is

not so rigorously confined to his church by the jealousy of the laity or by care for his prestige. In the country, it is unusual for him not to take a very active part in the administration of justice, in municipal life, in all works that call for the joint action of citizens. In the cities, he is an active agent of philanthropy ; he busies himself with schools, hygiene, and hospitals, he is seen in company with doctors, engineers, chemists. The old novelists have depicted the country parson as a great eater and drinker, a bold huntsman always just behind the hounds. This clerical Nimrod still exists and has not fallen off in popularity ; but we could exhibit other types at the present day : the priest absorbed in science, statistics, political economy, as careful for the bodies as the souls of men, the leader in every kind of progress, animated with the spirit of social reform. The *personnel* of the great universities and public schools is almost entirely clerical.

If the clergy mingles thus incessantly in civil life, the laity, on the other hand, does not remain a stranger to the government of the church. The Anglican Church, it is true, does not admit them to its assemblies. The Upper Chamber of the province of Canterbury is composed of twenty-two bishops ; the Lower Chamber, of all the deans and archdeacons, a deputy from each chapter and two proxies for the clergy of each diocese. But this Synod, which is called the Convocation, can no longer enact canons without the consent of the king and parliament. Parliament, which is a lay body, has reserved



this right to itself since the days of Charles I. ; it has regulated the liturgy and taken away from the Convocation the authority of a council. As to the Dissenting Churches, they all have a mixed form of government, in which both pastors and congregations are represented. Thus the spirit of discussion has a thousand different fields for its activity, as well in the official church as among the sects.

#### IV.

Underneath and by the side of the religious societies are all sorts of civil societies. The former keep the soul aloof from the world, the latter confirm it in the world and thrust it back, so to speak, upon the world. In a society where methodical legislation has regulated everything, where one supreme will makes itself felt through a thousand channels to the most remote extremities of the empire, the individual, propped up, protected, directed, at last falls asleep in a sort of selfish quietude. The more the laws are perfected, the more the men become mediocre. When there is a regulation for everything, there is no more room for self-imposed rule. Nothing is more tedious than to study or describe the local and municipal institutions of England, because we cannot detect in them any apparent order, any general rule, any simple principle. Yet there are two things controlling all the others and lighting up with a fixed light this con-

fused mass of customs, institutions and abuses. The one is what I shall call the idea of corporation, or association, the other is the unswerving notion of contract, *feudum*. Kindred interests have, from time immemorial, drawn together and organized themselves into groups; by uniting for various purposes, men have formed various sorts of multiple persons, legal, lasting, immortal beings. But these persons, that are after a fashion impersonal, have never aspired to absolute sovereignty; they have made bargains and treaties with the State, whether king or parliament; they have always paid homage to the sovereign and acknowledged his authority. Their liberty moves within a limited sphere, defined by charters, contracts, written grants or customs.

The idea of individual sovereignty, of the rights of man, is not the bond of union of all these groups and corporations, but rather the idea of a bargain, a duty, contracted obligations, the need of working for some common end. The liberty of corporations, communes, parishes, boards and committees of all kinds, is all the more energetic, jealous, and active for being subject to the general laws of the realm. It does not inspire the law, neither can it make nor interpret the law, but it makes use of it as an ægis and a protection.

In France, the Commune has always been either servile or rebellious. The ancient Gallic municipalities were copies of imperial Rome; Périgueux, Bourges, Marseilles, Reims, Paris, Metz, Arles, Toulouse, Narbonne, Nîmes were consular cities. "*Civitas sit libera et nullius jurisdic*

*tioni subjecta.*” Paris has neither solicited nor obtained a royal charter ; it is the same with most French cities. They regard themselves as having sovereign rights. It was the dream of Etienne Marcel to found a confederation of sovereign cities, of which Paris should be the chief. Speaking of his revolt, a French historian has said : “ We feel the revolutionary *verve* and at the same time the administrative genius of the great commune ” (Michelet). The *great commune*, namely, is the Reign of Terror, taking the place of the king, oppressing even the national assembly, in possession of every power, recruiting its own army, exclusively legislating for the city. Either the commune oppresses the State or is oppressed by it. “ The most ancient and most important communes, says Thierry, grew up spontaneously, by insurrection, against seignorial power.” It is only in the north, in Flanders, Normandy, and the Maine, in the eastern districts bordering on the German Empire, that we find communes that are neither rebellious nor sovereign by virtue of the old Roman law. They are corporations bound by a treaty in due form, by a royal charter. Leveling royalty passed over all these communes of such varied origin, crushing out in one place the germs of Latin liberty, in another the germs of Teutonic liberty. The Revolution continued the work begun by royalty : the temper of our ancestors in this matter may be summed up in the following opinion, uttered by a member of the Council of Five Hundred : “ France is a republic one and indivisible. Can we permit this republic, formed by the will and the combined interests of the nation,

to be broken up into a multitude of corporations that thrust themselves in between the State and its members in such a manner as to subdivide the one great association into as many petty governments as there are villages and hamlets and encourage that municipal spirit which the constitution has sought to destroy? We have done all that we could to destroy these bastard authorities."—The Revolution always had for its ideal the subjection of France to the dictatorship of Paris. The Commune of Paris has never been a simple municipality, it has been a usurping and insurgent Committee armed with every political right. When the Revolution offered to all the communes absolute independence, the right of arming and defending themselves and governing themselves without control, it did so only in the hour of struggle, when it had need of provincial allies against a government that still held out. After its triumph, it never kept its promises, it always withheld from the communes not merely the rights of sovereignty but administrative independence.

The history of the English commune has been different, it has never aspired to political independence. All the free boroughs in England were at the start corporations; they had for title only a royal charter. These charters converted the inhabitants of the towns into freemen, gave them freedom of trade and commerce, the right of holding markets, fiscal franchises, electoral privileges, but never gave them the least particle of that executive authority which belongs only to the sovereign. English municipal liberty is the result of contract; it has a

Germanic character ; the emperors always treated with communal corporations as with vassals. But the independence which begins with vassalage is more likely to last than that which begins with rebellion. It threatens no right, it is humble and patient. Is it not a singular coincidence that the two most disgraceful treaties that France has ever signed, five centuries apart, the treaty of Brétigny and the treaty of Frankfort, should be the chastisement of the two most formidable explosions of Latin municipal spirit, the commune of Etienne Marcel and the commune of 1871 ? No English city, not even London, has ever aspired to give laws to the kingdom, and never have the English cities been punished for their usurpations by the complete loss of municipal franchises. Political liberty has never sought to have any other agent than parliament ; neither royalty nor the cities have had any interest in destroying charters. Sovereignty is in the law, in a union of ideal forces ; not in city parks and walls. People know what is meant by a free city, but they do not know what is meant by a State made up of free cities, Collecting men together in masses does not confer upon them any new political rights ; it only imposes upon them cares and duties, and consequently attributes of a purely domestic nature. The municipality should be one degree lower than the State. So it is in England ; we do not find the legislator in the parish or the town-council. Thousands of petty rural or municipal communities have their self-government, their money matters, their petty government by representation, all differing somewhat ; landed property,

the church, the people are represented. According to the ancient Saxon custom, each parishioner who paid his taxes was entitled to a seat in the council, the *vestry*; in the course of time the councils became close corporations, oligarchies. In almost every case the voting became cumulative, i. e., each vote counted in proportion to the taxes paid by the voter, one counting as one, another as ten, etc. Since 1831 (Hobhouse Act), the parishes have had a more equitable way of voting.

It is easy enough to arraign this system of municipal corporations founded under the protection of royal charters, to point out the abuses committed by these petty governments that made their own profit out of the property of the corporation, its loans, tolls, and electoral rights, now become a monopoly, and generally kept their proceedings secret. These petty oligarchies, limited in their sphere and jealous of their rights, neglected too often their real functions, concerned themselves less about police, prisons, lighting and paving streets, public health, than about defending their patronage and the public dinners where they displayed their luxury. One city was in the hands of a close corporation that elected its own members; another was delivered up to a council and its creatures, taken from the most wretched classes and invested, under the title of *freemen*, with the electoral privilege. These abuses lasted until the Reform of 1832; at the present day, municipal government is truly representative and no longer oligarchic. Parliament overthrew, as soon as it saw fit, these petty old councils, and passed a municipal act giving to



all tax-payers a right of control over the administration and over the employment of public money. The monopoly of municipal corporations had necessarily to come to an end with the parliamentary monopoly of the aristocracy. Still, these corporations had not been without their utility ; they were so occupied with their own privileges, that they never thought of making any incursions into the field of general politics to defy or rule the State. They were like misers who, to conceal their wealth, make themselves appear humble and poverty-stricken. The State could ignore and despise them ; but this ignoring and contempt became the guaranties of independence. These corporations have been an obstacle in the way of progress. They have operated almost everywhere as a restraint upon Dissenters and have fettered trade to its injury. Birmingham owes its prosperity to the circumstance that it was at first a refuge for Dissenters, a free city for trade and industry. The parliamentary investigation of 1831 let in the daylight upon the obscurity of these corporations. They had, it is true, contributed to the formation of public habits in England ; but the life had long since gone out of them, and nothing remained but the mildew of abuses. They had lost much of their usefulness, now that freedom of meeting and freedom of association had become inviolable. In place of the old, worm-eaten machines, new ones were created day by day, moveable and transitory, suited to shifting needs. The provincial character of the corporations gave way to the modern spirit, that demands rapid and incessant progress.

The law did not touch the ancient corporation of London, protected by so many memories. Its vulgar luxury, the confusion of its finances, its detestable administration, have not yet filled up the measure of English patience. But all sorts of special committees (Boards) are placed over it, leaving it little more than the outward show. Still, people have a vague sort of fear of thoroughly consolidating London into a municipality, and thus placing by the side of parliament a government representing three millions of men. What would the *Commune* of London be? At the present day, the City is only a sort of bourgeois principality, the richest in the world, that delights in bestowing its lavish hospitality upon kings and emperors and their ambassadors.

In studying English municipal institutions, we are struck with the utter absence of symmetry, system or method. The *municipium* has not destroyed the parish. By the side of mayors and town councils, we find wardens and vestrymen, some occupied in collecting the poor-rates and superintending charitable institutions, others occupied with the revenues of the church; beadles and policemen together see that the Sunday laws are observed. In name at least, the church still continues to be the providence of the poor. It submits only with impatience to the supervision of commissioners. The action of the State is principally manifest in the creation of special committees (Boards), charged with various offices. The cities call upon parliament for local laws authorizing them to make improvements, such as docks, ports, water-works; these local laws create new

kinds of corporations,—elective and responsible,—temporary organs of administration. New instruments are constantly being made for fresh wants. All these groups, corporations, committees, derive their power from the act of the sovereign ; their freedom is restrained in its action only by public opinion and by the courts. They are not infected either with bureaucratic servility or with the spirit of revolution. Most of the functions relating to municipal administration, schools, churches, public aid, public health, are rendered gratuitously. They impose duties ; they raise the citizen to a higher plane, accustom him to voluntary rules and responsibilities, to daily sacrifices, to contact with opposing and independent wishes ; they drag the rich, the noble, the idle, out of themselves, and place before their eyes the world with its needs, its desires, its sufferings, its disgrace, its moral ailments.

It is the same with those countless societies that are not connected in any way with government or administration.\* No one is suffered to keep to himself ; a thousand hands are always ready to drag the rich man from his repose ; his hand must be always open, he must give to art and science, to poverty, to fashion, to his party, to his church. Society seems to be ever saying to man : “What

\* There are hundreds of societies, for instance, that take the place of public judicial action ; for want of magistrates charged with following up crime and misdemeanor, there are societies for preventing the corruption of the morals of youth, stopping the publication of obscene books and prints, denouncing medical malpractice, hunting out forgeries and counterfeiting, etc. etc. All these associations aim at preserving public order, they come to the aid of private interests.

would you be by yourself? All that you are worth, all that you possess, you owe to me. I have need of your hands, your words, your exertions. Your fortune is one of the golden nails in my temple ; your glory, a ray from mine ; your life, only an hour of national life." There is no idleness ; no task is declined. Is it in order to escape from the nebulous ennui that is always threatening to cover up life in dull countries where nature affords so little to the senses? Is there need of some whirl of excitement to keep up energy, that indispensable weapon in over-populated countries? Is it the rude instinct that keeps together animals of the same herd? Is it the active sense of duty never satisfied, ever seeking fresh burdens? Is it an instinctive protest against the venerable hierarchy of the aristocracy, a search after whatever may furnish new bonds of union among men, may draw them closer together and unite them in a common work?

Be it as it may, if we explore the cultivated classes, we shall find very few lives perfectly solitary and purely selfish. The more embellished and respectable and brilliant such lives might be through the refinements afforded by civilization, the more dastardly they would appear. This incessant exertion, that takes men out of the narrow circle of their interests, is like a ransom, something to be paid as a matter of course. Each man must give what he has. Some give their name, others money, others their time and their words. No one is permitted to be avaricious. We might fill whole pages with a list of societies and associations, some of which exercise functions elsewhere

assigned to the State. The great leagues that are formed from time to time are spontaneous political forces, stirring up public opinion, enlisting the timid and indifferent, and organizing the national will. They rise like human tides. Who has not heard of the history of the league for the abolition of the corn laws ?

The Latin mind, that likes order, discipline, the State, is shocked by the rudeness, the tumult of those great popular movements in England that prepare the way for and hasten reform. There is something ridiculous in every assemblage of men, something that grates upon a sensitive taste, some bungling, grotesque, broken-down actors, some hypocrites, some consequential ones, some bores. But no method has yet been invented of governing men *ab extra*, with a fairy's wand ; they must come in contact with one another, must see, measure, judge one another. There is too much of contempt in the wisdom of the moralist who turns his back upon crowds and holds up his cloak that it may not catch the mud. The best and the purest lose something by solitude : the capacity of feeling strongly for others, self-oblivion, generosity, courage.

The English law has retained *fidei commissa* (trusts), and the universal use of them may be regarded as having some remote influence upon public habits. It lays upon a multitude of persons the obligations arising from responsibility ; it forces them continually to occupy themselves with interests other than their own. There is scarcely a person that is not a sort of *tutor*, a trustee, for some woman, or relative, or friend ; for some corporation or

society ; people look upon it quite as a matter of course to perform their duties as trustees gratuitously. One of the Catholic archbishops of Ireland, I have been informed, has in his keeping eight millions of francs per annum ; this sum is entrusted to him by his co-religionists in virtue of his dignity. Such a system presupposes confidence between man and man, it ennobles the race ; it has its inconveniences, doubtless, but it enhances the feeling of solidarity among men.

No country, perhaps, has been so long and so thoroughly centralized as England, in this sense, that there is but one sovereignty, that of the king and his parliament, and this sovereignty is in its way unlimited. At the same time there is no country where we perceive so few traces of central authority. Royal power and parliamentary power overthrew at an early date all their rivals ; they established political unity, but they did not concern themselves about administrative unity. In other centralized countries, the government, not content with making the laws, is bent upon having everywhere, even in the villages, defenders and interpreters of those laws. In England, we shall look in vain for these advocates of the government, prefects, sub-prefects, mayors, in direct correspondence with the agents of the central power ; this active and obedient army of functionaries, regents of opinion and translators of will, who flit from one end of the country to the other. Royalty never succeeded in overthrowing the aristocratic class, and this class, retaining the political power at Westminster, has also held on to the administrative



power in the provinces. Its representatives are the Lords-Lieutenant, whose office is only a costly sinecure,\* the Sheriffs, who give the judges on their circuit a pompous reception and are supposed to protect them, and the Justices of the Peace, whose services, like those of the sheriff, are gratuitous. Nowhere do we find long-robed gentry (*gens de robe*); for most cases are brought before magistrates who are landed gentry of the county, or before the *itinerant* judges (from Wesminster) who make their circuits twice a year. This system has been in vogue ever since Henry II. (1179), who was the first to divide England into circuits. There was no chance, then, for the formation of a *noblesse de robe*, or *parlements* like those we see in France prior to 1789; the influence derived from the administration of justice is disseminated and dissolved, as it were, throughout the nation. It is all the more profound from this circumstance, that all cases tried at Westminister or before the circuit judges are submitted to a jury, whether the matter be one of civil or of criminal law. The jury has only to pass upon matters of fact, but the judge always instructs them as to the consequences of their verdict, defines every question with precision, throws as much light as possible upon the case; the jurors, moreover, being called upon to fix the amount of damages, are compelled to weigh for themselves the

\* James II. tried to convert the Lords-Lieutenant into electoral agents, prefects. He ordered them to lay certain interrogatories before their deputies and the Justices of the Peace, and draw up lists of the friends of the king. Half of them refused to play this new part, the others gave the king trivial answers.

most delicate shades in the *nexus* of cause and effect. The venerable institution of the jury has, beyond a doubt, aided powerfully in developing public conscience and rendering the English people familiar with legislative problems.

The nation has reserved for itself, so to speak, the right of judging ; it has contented itself with a very small number of guides, judicial oracles. The Chancellor and his Vice-Chancellors, the Westminster judges, are not numerous enough to constitute a caste ; the lawyers are few in number, overwhelmed with work, consuming their zeal and their strength in the incessant study of the most complicated legal system in the world. Wherever codes exist, the study of the law becomes an easy thing ; the entire legislation of the State of Illinois is contained in two volumes, and every ten years the legislature makes a new edition. The result is that any intelligent man there may become a lawyer in a few months ; but the student of so easy a system is speedily tempted to become law-maker. The legislatures in America, like the French Chambers since 1789, are overrun with *legists* ; the lawyer-spirit has never invaded the English Commons. There are lawyers among them, to be sure ; but the influence, the initiative, is still with the purely political spirit. Moreover, the land-owners who fill the House are all or nearly all justices or magistrates, something more than mere talkers. They have had, they still have in their keeping the honor, the lives, the liberties, the fortunes of citizens. From the very circumstance that the bulk of the nation is used to the sight and administration

of justice, its representatives are less under the sway of professors of chicanery and dealers in words.

City government is a sort of republic, the municipal charter taking the place of a constitution. The municipal magistrates are not lords, or gentry ; they are ordinarily bourgeois, merchants ; they are called elders (*aldermen*). These petty local governments are most unpretending ; they have no political influence or ambition. They do not aspire to representing the State ; they do not get their orders from anybody and do not pretend to give orders to anybody. The government of the boroughs is almost the same as that of the cities. In the villages, there is neither mayor nor council of any kind. It must be understood that these villages are nothing but dependencies of the great estates, outhouses for blacksmiths, wheelwrights, carpenters, inn-keepers, field-laborers, the schoolmaster, a few petty shopkeepers. The village is not the unit of administration, it is merely an agglomeration. Formerly, the lord of the village had the right of holding a baronial court ; he appointed a constable to preserve order and to pursue and imprison malefactors until they could be brought before the judge. The squire on his estate was like a king, he was the judge in everything that concerned the land and the people on it.

At the present day, the government of the counties belongs as a matter of fact to the county magistrates, the Justices of the Peace, who exercise both judicial and administrative functions. These *notables*, appointed by the Lord-Chancellor on the recommendation of the Lord-Lieutenant,

sit four times a year. These are the permanent general councils ; they fix the county-rates, and adjust the proportions for the several items of expenditure ; attend to the poor-rates, the county-police, roads, jails, taverns, inn-keepers, licenses, weights and measures, asylums for the insane.\* They act also as examining magistrates in criminal proceedings, and, with the coöperation of a jury, take cognizance of crimes punishable by transportation for a term of years, by imprisonment, or fine. They act as a court of appeal for sentences passed by the Justices of the Peace in case of misdemeanor.

The stranger who wishes to get at a glance a clear and vivid idea of England, should not go to parliament, perhaps, nor to the House of Lords, but to some provincial town where the Court of Quarter Sessions is sitting. There are one thousand eight hundred of these judges in England, volunteer magistrates, general councillors, invested with the most extensive administrative, executive, and judicial powers. These sovereigns on a small scale are men of the world, belonging to the class from which we in France have taken, thus far, our *conseillers généraux*. It should be observed that they are independent of the electors ; the municipal governments are elected and are responsible, but the county governments are not elected and are not held to direct responsibility. They

\* When the county wishes to make extraordinary expenditures for improvements or otherwise, they draw up a bill to be presented to parliament, authorizing the county to create a loan or impose a special tax.

exercise a sort of traditionary patronage ; they represent the idea,—now dying out,—of patriarchal, paternal government. Young men of twenty-one have their names entered upon the list of justices of the peace ; they are sportsmen sitting in judgment on poachers, owners punishing infringements on the rights of property.

It is very easy to criticise such a system ; still, we can understand how, being kept up for centuries, it must have developed a race essentially political, proud, accustomed to command, drinking in with the air of its fields the feeling of its own power and independence. The county courts date back to the Conquest ; the Norman *free tenants* attended them, sword in hand and the baldric slung over their shoulders, and judged all suits, excepting those of the high barons, which were reserved for the *aula regia*. The barbarian confusion of powers is still to be seen in these petty assemblages of notables. The masters of the soil perceive nothing above or even beside them. What is there to remind them that all power must bow before inflexible justice ? they are judges ; before the majesty of the State ? they themselves exercise almost all the functions assigned in other lands to the State ; even before divine majesty itself ? the ministers of God are their clients. The magistracy does not exist as a great body, separate from the others and stern, that threatens as much as it protects. Administration is a plain over which the individual marches, not a mountain looking down upon him. The provincial forces are like springs wide apart ; there is no river into which they can empty and lose themselves

one in the other. The contributions of the towns and counties do not first pass through the hands of State collectors ; in France, even when the department or the commune imposes its own taxes, it still seems to be the almoner of the State.

Election and selection, the republican system of the town and the aristocratic system of the country, although so widely different, still labor under the same radical inconveniences ; they suffer the administration to fall into incapable hands. A certain sturdy good sense, a very nice sense of honor among gentlemen, personal rectitude, zeal for the public good will not take the place of the mass of technical knowledge that is now indispensable in public administration. There is the science of highways, the science of hospitals, the science of primary education, the science of public aids and charities, the science of public health, and others, that can not produce their full results unless favored by a certain centralization of skill, effort, and will.

It was the terrible problem of public charity that first forced England to depart from traditionary routine. The parishes sufficed for the charities of past times ; our modern times call for parochial union. All the sciences that I have mentioned have their organs in special committees. Parliament creates them one by one, enlarges, perfects them. Every year it takes another step toward centralization ; but it must be carefully understood that this centralization does not create any new political forces ; it springs solely from the need of reducing expenses and bettering the condition of the people.



The reform of the Poor Laws was the point of departure of the move toward unity, order, and control in administration ; the new spirit, quite humble and undecided at the outset, in fact almost unconscious of itself, still contents itself with small gains. The Rating and Local Government Act of 1871, undertook to strip the municipal corporations of many of their ancient rights. By the terms of the Municipal Corporation Act of 1836, these corporations elected annually *auditors* of accounts, to be taken from among the tax-payers. They had the right of levying direct taxes, had their collectors, their fiscal *personnel*. The new law tends to place the government of the towns, in a financial point of view, under the direction of the centralized administration of public aids. To effect this object, it makes use of the parishes, setting them up against the municipal corporations. Every parish that has an overseer of the poor has a parish committee, elected, that is charged with levying the *consolidated* rate, so called because it comprises all the local taxes. These parish committees or boards submit their accounts to salaried auditors, who are *State agents*, and who can cut down excessive expenditures, strike out such as are not authorized by law, and insist upon such as are prescribed by law. The boards appoint tax collectors, who are subordinated to a central board called the board for local government, that prescribes the forms of accounts and the manner of verifying them, and fixes the salaries of the auditors. The parish boards have the right of fixing the quotas of the consolidated tax.

If this law is enforced strictly, it is evident that the

power of the municipal corporations will diminish more and more. The financial administration of the towns will be under the control of boards directed by the central authority. Parliament will soon have to overhaul all local institutions. At present there are too many and too disproportionate centres of administration : 1st, the parish ; 2d, the borough or city ; 3d, the county ; 4th, the union ; 5th, the highway district ; 6th, the so-called local improvement district, sewage district, etc. All these bits of mosaic are not placed side by side but piled one on top of the other ; the districts cross and overlap each other ; each particular unit has its own taxes, its own method of apportionment. One of them must at last swallow up all the others, establishing its accountability, its boundaries, and its officials. Whichever one it may be, it will be governed by an elective body. The parish is too small to produce very good boards of administration ; and as these boards can not do without salaried agents, the area of administration must be larger. The present *union*, the boundaries of which are fixed by the recent Poor Laws, is adapted to one of the most imperative needs of the country ; the Sanitary Act has already invested it with additional functions, and it is possible that it may gradually absorb all the offices of administration. One thing is certain, that local taxes have become enormous and that it will be necessary to devise some system of collection that shall be less expensive and a more equitable mode of assessment.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *The People and Social Questions.*

#### I.

PARLIAMENT has represented in turn the military and landed nobility, the upper bourgeoisie, the lower bourgeoisie; at the present day it represents the entire people. The class living by wages has not yet sent to parliament any artisans; either it judges that its interests are already sufficiently protected, or it yields instinctively to the feeling of respect for aristocracy and wealth. For all that, English politics have gradually changed in character during the past fifty years, social questions have assumed a position more and more prominent. The crowd, the multitude, is not only flattered by ambitious demagogues, it has become an object of the most anxious solicitude on the part of statesmen. The legislator keeps his eye ever fixed upon that great sea of men called the people, watching the slightest ripples raised by the wind, seeking to conjecture the profound and obscure under-currents. The English aristocracy experiences neither hatred nor contempt for the people; nothing is foreign to it that forms a part of *English* humanity. The lord does not hesitate to

box with the workman. There is a kind of equality, created by race and the insular position of England, that crops out through all the masks and fictions of hierarchy. The revolutions, already a thing of the past, involved only the aristocratic parties; the levelers appeared only for a moment under Cromwell. High and low have never been separated by a river of blood; there are no fresh memories, as in France, keeping alive almost sacred hates. Envy has not been sharpened; it has never dashed the throne to pieces, trampled down estates and castles in triumphant procession. Aristocracy, ennobled wealth, feeling themselves strong, protected against attack, are more good-natured; they wield their patronage with more of regal grandeur, they are more equitable, more humane; they fulfil quietly the duties of their guardianship.

England, gorged and surfeited with wealth, is like a huge caterpillar feeding upon the foliage and leaving nothing but a skeleton leaf. The bright, sparkling green that disappears beneath the invisible gnawing is the brave, strong race swallowed up by civilization and industry. We cannot tax the aristocracy nor the bourgeoisie with the evils endured by the English people; but we should be astounded if, in view of such evils, they were not moved to pity and tormented with perpetual cares. What are constitutional problems by the side of the great problem: how to feed the people? Of what matter are political parties, if there is a hunger-party? The workman who leads his life of hard toil without catching a glimpse of the blue sky, who sees his wife and children—the only beings whom

he can love—droop, grow pale, and suffer, reck little of Privy Councils, changes in the Ministry, of Lords, Commons, and the Constitution. It has often been said that government was made for the people, not people for the government. The office of government is 'not, it is clear, to make the happiness of the citizen, but it is the office of government to diminish as much as possible the misery and suffering of mankind, to give somewhat of liberty to mind and body, to gather up the dead and wounded on the battle-field of life. We must always keep in mind that this frail and complex mechanism which we call the State cannot, in final resort, dispense with the virtue and goodwill of all, with perpetual and universal renunciation and sacrifice. The wild beast that dwells in each one of us, cast upon the earth with his rude desires, instincts, appetites, makes himself the slave of a law, the servant of an ideal, a faith, a principle. The more the individual owes to society, the more society in turn owes to the individual. Man approaches to moral perfection only when he has ceased to think of himself, has given himself up to his family and his friendships, to some doctrine, some work. The maxims of christianity, it is very true, are far from having pervaded the politics of the nations called most christian; there can be no absolute indifference to the world among governing classes, political parties, statesmen, and sovereigns. But those in whose hands birth, tradition, and wealth have placed the moral government of England have, at least in our day, a rather strict sense of their duties. Books, newspapers, sermons are incessantly displaying

before their eyes the obscure drama of popular life. In Dickens, for instance, there is an almost feminine tenderness for whatever is lowly, suffering, wretched, squalid, for those who hunger and thirst after goodness, for the beggars of fortune. Charity is not always so gracious ; more frequently it is surly, growling and playing the pedagogue, bristling with figures and statistics or cloaked in ponderous dogmatism. There is a sort of philanthropy that is nothing more than a trade and serves as a mask for the most ungenerous ambitions ; pompous and irritable, it seeks rather to tyrannize over public opinion than to alleviate suffering. But its very absurdities and excesses only serve to show the power that the spirit of charity has acquired in English society.

This society has, from the earliest times, discriminated between misfortune and sloth ; it has acknowledged the claims of misfortune, but it has been inflexible toward those who are still able to work. It looks upon poverty with such horror that it repels the voluntary pauper ; it takes charge of the aged and infirm, but treats the able-bodied vagabond without mercy, like a stray dog or a deserter. There is no faith in the sanctity of poverty. Mendicity was one of the first results of the abolition of villenage. As early as Richard II., there were so many vagabonds that domestic servants and laborers were forbidden to remove from one part of the kingdom to another. At the same time a portion of the revenues of the church was set aside for the poor. The Act of 1531 (Henry VIII.) orders the justices of the peace, the mayors,



sheriffs, and municipal officers to seek out the helpless and give them begging licenses, fixing their beats. Able-bodied (*valiant*) mendicants were to be whipped: They shall be dragged on a hurdle to the nearest town, stripped and whipped through the town until their bodies are covered with blood. (Oxford students were not permitted to beg without a licence). Those who were guilty of a second offence had their right ear cut off and received the bastinado; for a third offence, they lost the left ear and were beaten with cudgels. The statute of 1536 (Henry VIII.) sharpens even these horrible penalties. Private charity is restricted; vagabond children of five years and upwards are put to forced labor. The third offence is to be treated as a felony and punished with death. The church had been until then the chief nurse of the poor; she was the one, then, to be reached by persecuting poverty. An act passed under Edward VI. provides that any adult, whether man or woman, who is able to work but refuses to do so, shall be branded on the breast with the letter V and adjudged to the informer as his slave for two years. The master may fasten an iron ring around the neck, arm, or leg of his slave.

This horrible law was speedily repealed; the 43d Elizabeth became the foundation of subsequent legislation on the subject of the poor. This statute established the right of the infirm poor to assistance, and left the management of it to the parishes. Mendicants and vagabonds were still pursued with ferocity. Under James I., dangerous vagabonds (landed magistrates sitting as

their judges) might be branded on the shoulder ; a second offence was treated as felony without benefit of clergy.

The law of settlement was passed in 1662 ; it prevented the laborer from seeking a market for his labor. " There is scarcely a man of forty in all England," says Adam Smith, a century later, " who has not been cruelly oppressed by this law." The laborers were, in fact, serfs of the glebe. The 17th George II. provides that a woman who shall be delivered of a child in any other parish than her own shall be publicly whipped and sent to prison for six months. The 32d George III. provides that the justices of the peace shall not give vagabonds their discharge until they have been whipped or imprisoned seven days. Personal liberty is the privilege of the proprietary class.

Notwithstanding these cruel measures, pauperism spread like a plague over the country. Each parish turned away strangers but supported its own poor, who, in consequence of their right to assistance, had lost all sense of shame. A stupid system of charity without any soul, without any principle of discrimination, given up to red tape, confounded the poverty of cynicism with the poverty of misfortune. Honor, pride, independence became extinct among the laboring classes. There was a sort of premium on idleness, for the honest laborer saw himself at a disadvantage as compared with one whose expenses were borne in part by the parish ; the soil was tilled by paupers whom the new agriculture had hunted up in their poor-houses. The revenues from the soil were eaten up by the parish.

In 1833, the poor-rate amounted to two hundred and fifteen millions.

The evil became so great that efforts were made to remedy it ; a new Poor Law was passed in 1834. An attempt was made to distinguish between genuine poverty and hypocritical begging, to find some practical mark of recognition ; those applying for relief were compelled to leave their homes and families and enter the *workhouses*. Wherever one parish alone was too poor to build and support one of these pauper-hospitals, two or more were permitted to club together to form a *union*. We often encounter in England these big houses, built out in the open fields in a bastard Gothic style of architecture ; they are the convents where the disgraced pauper, separated from his family, is reduced to degrading labor, forced to pick oakum and break stone. Each of these workhouses is under the direction of a committee of guardians, who submit their accounts to the central committee in London. The new law was a dyke erected against pauperism ; but its stringency has been relaxed little by little ; it is impossible to avoid giving aid at home ; public charity cannot shut up all the unfortunate in prison, or be insensible to the more respectable, the accidental and temporary cases of misfortune ; it cannot be always sundering family ties, the tenderest and often the only ones that keep certain beings within the bounds of the human species. Each one of the 666 charity-prisons of the country serves at the same time as a hospital. But what hospitals ! Doctors, medicine, dispensaries, infirmaries, everything is insufficient. Grave mala-

dies cannot be treated properly by an ignorant young doctor or a nurse who is scarcely able at times to read the prescriptions. The evil of poverty is preying upon the richest country in the world. Paupers are treated at their homes, when they cannot be put in the infirmaries. In 1868, the poor-rate exceeded two hundred and fifty millions.\* Nearly three-fourths of the yield of local taxation were swallowed up in this gulf. There are, in round numbers, 15,000 parishes in England and Wales. Each one has two overseers, who adjust and collect the poor-rates. This alone makes 30,000 employés. Each parish has at least one guardian, many of them have more than one; these guardians receive the poor-rates collected by the overseers. Let us add the collectors and assistants, numbering about 2,000. There are thus at least 55,000 agents of public charity. If we bear in mind that, according to the last census, there are only 69,000 office-holders in England, we shall see that pauperism has almost as many servants as the government.

\* The total amount of local taxes at the present day amounts to about four hundred million francs.

Poor rate.....	£11,364,000
Buildings.....	1,449,000
Local government.....	923,000
Highways, not including deductions from the poor rate...	770,000
Municipal taxes.....	700,000
Improvements.....	699,000
Church rates.....	230,000
Drainage.....	154,000
City of London.....	109,000
Sewers.....	70,000
City police.....	51,000
Lighting.....	41,000
	<hr/> £16,560,000

The population of England and Wales in 1766 was eight millions and a half. At the present day, it is about twenty-two millions. In 1777, the poor-rates were forty-three million francs. Thus the population has not quite trebled in one hundred years, while the pauper budget has become six times as large.

On January first, 1872, there were 981,042 paupers entered on the rolls of public charity in England and Wales ; sixteen per cent. were in public houses of charity, eighty-four per cent. received support at their homes. The list comprised: 1st. Male adults, 39,512 able-bodied and 150,787 infirm. 2d. Female adults, 114,241 able-bodied and 283,616 infirm. 3d. Children under sixteen, 255,404 of parents in good health and 84,474 of parents in ill health. 4th. Vagabonds, 3,378. 5th. Idiots and lunatics, 21,494, men, 27,427 women 1,063 children. On the first of January 1871, there were 104,619 paupers more than on the same day 1872. Pauperism, then, had diminished by a tenth.

In London alone, that has a population of 3,250,000, according to the census of 1871, there were in 1871, on the average, 100,000 to 150,000 persons, according to the season, receiving public aid either at home or in charitable houses. In London, not more than a third do not receive aid at home, and the number of adults is slightly in excess of that of children. There has been a gradual falling-off of pauperism from 1869 to 1872 ; by contrasting the figures of one week with those of the corresponding week in the other years, we find that they had diminished

in 1872 by about a fourth. Thus, during the fourth week of October there were aided, in 1869, 133,611 paupers; in 1870, 131,200; in 1871, 115,474; in 1872, only 103,208. The most wretched parts of London are those in the southern district, Southwark, Lambeth, Greenwich, etc; then come: 1st, the northern district, St. Pancras, Marylebone, Hackney, Islington; 2d, the eastern district, Shoreditch, Poplar, Bethnal Green; 3d, the centre district, Holborn, the City, the Strand; 4th, the western district, where there is only one very wretched quarter, St. George. The tide of misery is now on the ebb. Statesmen find in the statistics of the poor the most happy confirmation of the policy of peace and commercial liberty that has been in the ascendant for some years.

We may assert that in London five out of every hundred inhabitants live by public charity; ten years ago, the number was only three. The innumerable private societies, hospitals, religious associations, charity-schools, spend, in the capital alone, one hundred and twenty-five millions annually; by adding the poor-rates, we get an aggregate sum of from one hundred and seventy to two hundred millions. Assuming that each pauper, taking the average of men, women, children, able-bodied, and infirm, costs five hundred francs a year, London might keep as many as 400,000. But its immense charity-budget is badly administered; it passes through too many hands and is largely unproductive. Still, imagine a city where poverty imposes upon wealth such heavy sacrifices. London



is not so much a city as a province of brick and mortar, where three millions of men live and move. The bends of the great muddy river, the interminable streets, the labyrinth of cross-streets and alleys represent a cancer, as it were, spreading from year to year and eating away the gardens, the meadows, the green fields. What journeys we may make through these immense teeming quarters without ever knowing them really well ! Everywhere we find the same long rows of low, uniform houses of black brick ; everywhere we find the same ragged children playing on the doorsteps and in the streets ; on their faces, sometimes still fresh, sometimes already withered, we may read an expression of indifference, but the faces of the adults are stamped with the seal of fate ; they bear the burden of life with a gloomy and almost savage air. Their misery is not a purgatory but a hell from which they no longer dream of escaping.

Every capital is like a vise pressing together living beings and wringing out their suffering. Still, it is not in London that the mortality is the greatest ; far from it. The health-giving sea comes every day to wash away its garbage. But the workman, the pauper, has no decent lodging-place ; the *home* of which England boasts, the household oasis, the pleasant family retreat, is something unknown to him. The child lives out-doors, playing in the black mud and watching the quarrels and fights of drunkenness ; at night, he crawls into a corner of the public bed, where he warns himself against his brothers and sisters. He grows up ; learns a little about politics from

the newspaper placards, catches the distant echoes of great trials, of crimes, disasters, wars, battles. He is warmed by the inner sun of youth ; should he love, should he pick some flower that has opened by his side on its human dung-heap, where shall the newly married couple go ? To some house already swarming with tenants, where they pay dear for an empty room and an old bed. This is the hiding-place for dreary loves, delights of a day and pangs long drawn out ; children come, and there is no longer room. They must hunt up some other refuge ; even poverty has its hierarchy. Children bring discredit upon a house ; overgrown families, turned out by the landlord's agent, must migrate to quarters of even worse repute.

The lowest degree of all is the Irish quarter ; a street once conquered by the Celts belongs to them for ever ; it is shunned by all who are not driven into it by inexorable necessity ; the Irishman alone plunges gaily into these haunts that resound with the din of bestial sport and the horrors of indecent, cynic, ragged intoxication. He pays two shillings and a half a week for the privilege of occupying one room with his wife and children ; the rotten floor rests on the damp ground ; the broken windows are stopped with paper ; everywhere the rain leaks through ; the little court, shared by five or six families, is a dung-heap ; but sloth disports at ease in this fetid atmosphere, this hideous communism ; we might almost say that the Irishman does not know how to suffer.

Most artisan families in the metropolis have only one room ; a few have two ; the aristocracy of labor has three.

Rents vary from three to eight shillings a week ; credit is rarely given for more than two weeks. A walk almost anywhere in London will give one glimpses at every turn of courts and gloomy alleys swarming, especially in the evening, with a melancholy crowd in tatters. The yellow light of the gas flickering in the damp west wind falls upon pensive faces tinged with a certain indelible sadness. What charming flowers here and there amid this gloomy mass of human vegetation, what pure features, noble and soft, bearing the imprint of childlike, christian grace ! And again what sombre faces, withered and worn, hewn by the rude hand of fate ! The forbidding houses are like tombs filled with the living. The subject of lodgings for workmen has become, in such a vast capital, a question of prime importance. If no answer be found, the workman will be in danger of relapsing,—in the very midst of civilization,—into barbarism. In London, industry is fettered by the law. How is it possible to put up good buildings, as long as the builder can not buy the ground and the house reverts, at the expiration of the lease, to the owner of the soil ? Houses are nothing more than tents. In Scotland, the lords of the manor for a long time have been obliged to abdicate their privileges, and cities have been built upon a system of ground-rents, which really creates a freehold subject only to an annual charge. Philanthropy alone cannot solve such a problem. We must change the surroundings, if we wish to change the man. It is not enough to build schools, for they do not comprise the whole of education. There is a teaching that goes on from

day to day, hour to hour, in the sensations with which childhood is surrounded. The blackened walls of brick not only exhale humidity; they also exhale ideas, a morality, a religion of their own.

Despite everything, the man of the people loves London, this living ant-heap, the proud river covered with masts, the immense dome of St. Paul's looking down upon the City, the forgetfulness of sight-seeing, the flaring gas-lamps, the cries, the eager throng, the shows, the fleeting visions of wealth and beauty that embellish a capital. It is not easy to get him away from this loadstone. For a place in this great noisy world, he will give a fifth or a fourth of his wages. For the same money, he might have a cottage in Lancashire or Yorkshire. He is still the victim of retail dealers and landlords; the new ideas of association and coöperation that have improved the condition of the workmen in the manufacturing districts have not yet transformed London. The London populace is worse off, in a material point of view, but in spirit, in imagination, it leads a more intense life in the infinite black void of the capital.

## II.

Industry derives its power from the organization, the division of labor; it is always trying to reduce general expenses, to concentrate, agglomerate its forces. In the manufacturing districts, then, we must look for the type of

the veritable workman. The regiments of labor are organized in brigades, divisions, and armies. The individual disappears, the soul is stifled, morals degenerate. Capital seizes even upon children. Before the passage of Sir Robert Peel's bill on apprenticeship, manufacturers supplied themselves with children from the parish, the poor-house, the metropolis. These children became slaves at the age of seven ; whipping was the only mode of punishment for them. Eighty women in a hundred in the manufacturing districts do not know how to use a needle ; dresses fall to pieces for want of some one who can mend them. The workman who gets high wages is not ashamed to wear the tattered, filthy livery of abject poverty. Half the children have no stockings ; numbers of workmen have only two shirts. The most violent tempests, the most frantic onslaughts of the wind, do not move the sea below a certain depth ; even so there is a subterranean England unreached by any moral current, any breath of religion. In the very midst of Protestant England, with its morbid conscience and its importunate piety, the workman of the north, in Sheffield for instance, is a veritable pagan ; not a sceptical, amiable, sensuous pagan, but coarse and savage. His ideal is high wages, that will allow him to eat and drink more and idle away three days in the week. Yet he is intelligent, tough, hardy, unscrupulous, bestial. The women of Sheffield habitually use profane language. There is no prostitution ; its place is supplied by universal and shameless debauch. Marriage often begins by concubinage. Young girls become mothers at fourteen. Men

and women indulge in promiscuous intercourse after heavy eating and still heavier drinking.

The workmen of Lancashire have some culture, some humanity ; the Staffordshire race is ruder ; at Newcastle, throughout the entire mining district of the north, we encounter an almost savage spirit ; the character is as hard as iron.

Roam through the streets of Glasgow in the evening and you will have before your eyes the evils that follow in the train of modern industry. The sight seems a dream ! Everywhere pale children only half covered by trailing rags, women with bare feet and legs. The native beauty of the race is obliterated and corrupted. The features are worn and debased, the gaze daring and immodest. Everywhere the wide-open doors of the gin-palace, where, by the light of the flaring gas-jets, men and women press around the bar and the flow of intoxicating liquors never ceases. There is drunkenness without repose. Here and there the dull, dingy, surging crowd flocks to some coarse show, some display of wax-like faces and glaring colors. Prostitution takes possession of the street, a prostitution that has rags for tinsel and soot for rouge. Opening on the main streets here and there, are gloomy alleys and courtyards. As far as our eye can reach, we observe human forms. What goes on in these dens ? Nowhere, not even in the most wretched quarters of Liverpool, have I seen a more degraded race ; among the children of the gutter, what pallid faces, what emaciated, bent, distorted bodies ; what horrible women with low foreheads and lack-lustre eyes,



shrunk and shriveled forms ! Glasgow, receiving the pure and copious waters of Loch Katrine, tries to cleanse her human stables ; but what moral springs will purify the souls ? Must civilization, then, reproduce barbarism ? Must the cloud of coal-smoke be a dense veil of misery and ignorance for millions of human beings ? The former serfs of the glebe had the blue sky, the sight of the hills, and woods, and fields, the fresh pure air, nature, that speaks so sweetly to the heart of man that even they who have been overwhelmed with the gifts of fortune always return to her as to the tenderest of mistresses. What do the serfs of modern industry have between the brick walls of their prison ? Energetic young men can flee, can emigrate, can defy the universe ; children and young girls remain a prey to the monster, helpless and unwilling victims. Hence there is nothing more pitiable than the condition of children in the great manufacturing cities ; the State should watch over them incessantly, and we must do this much justice to England, that she has, in favor of children, overcome her instincts, that are so much opposed to everything interfering with labor.

The industrial system has brought about evils that can not but move the generous heart ; industry has become an international battle. The cry is for production, abundant, cheap. General expenses must be reduced, and this necessitates the crowding of men into great ant-heaps where the individual disappears, becomes only a machine or a part of a machine. Life passes in a terrible monotony ; national greatness and wealth should not dazzle our

eyes so that we can no longer detect the humble instrument of this grandeur and wealth.

There is no evil without a cure in countries where there is a breath of liberty, where the christian soul shakes off the coarse fetters of the flesh and refuses to live by earthly pride alone. Pity and kindness are a sort of ultimate luxury, a refined delight dashed with remorse and terrible doubts. Charity becomes a sort of stimulant for minds that have tried and exhausted every source of emotion. The Englishman, rich, all-powerful, happy, or seeming to be happy, does not shrink from the defiling touch of misery, he does not flee from the sight of death or life that is little better than torture. We might almost say that he is attracted by evil, vice and crime, by the impure and the horrible. He will not rest in ignorance of anything ; he knows that steel does not lose its temper in the mire. He does not dwell in lofty, inaccessible fictions alone ; he lives upon earth, *nil humanum sibi alienum esse putat*, nothing is foreign to him that is human.\*

Christian faith and an almost morbid curiosity are not alone in setting charity in motion. Political economy, after having started the theory of production, has ended by discovering that of all products the most important is man, that the most precious instrument of labor is the workman. Social questions, bearing upon wages, the methods of organizing and utilizing savings, upon popular

\* It is worthy of note that English art does not disdain poverty and the workman. The novelists (Mrs. Gaskell, George Eliot, Dickens, Charles Reade) write of the loves of the poor ; they depict successfully idyls of the mine, the factory, and the workshop.

education, lodgings for workmen, their health and well-being, have become the great questions, occupying most the attention of statesmen ; it is these questions, doubtless, that will engage all Europe for the rest of the nineteenth century. No one has the right to call himself a politician, who fails to recognize their formidable importance.

England acts just as she has always done, without any preconceived resolve, without system. She brings her legislative action to bear only upon limited questions. When the condition of young apprentices excites public indignation, parliament passes a bill regulating the employment of children in factories. Another time parliament will take up the so-called night-lodging houses, the sanitary condition of workmen's houses, or the savings-banks connected with the post-offices, where the workman deposits his hard-earned gains. The legislative power is very cautious and hesitating in interfering with private transactions ; it does not undertake to organize labor, but contents itself with reforming flagrant abuses. Industry, often blind and rapacious, is always ready to elude these *acts*, to reject investigation, to protest against any interference in the matter of mines, steam-engines and the like. But enlightened industry ends by giving heed to those who advise it to make sure of the safety and well-being of the workman, to obtain labor that shall be enlightened by education, proper rest, and the establishment of institutions attaching the laborer to some group, some centre, some fireside. What humanity counsels, the interests of public

order will demand, the more imperatively the more extensive the rights conferred upon the people.

Two principles have crept almost simultaneously into legislation, principles apparently conflicting: absolute freedom of trade, and protection to labor. The school of political economy was not less vehement in its protest, at the start, against the interference of parliament in the labor-question, than the Tories were in their opposition to the abolishment of the protective laws. But at the present day, the most obstinate are forced to admit that the reform brought about by Cobden and his friends has given an incredible impulse to capital in England. So industry is resigned to the spectacle of parliament passing laws upon working-hours and the employment of children, creating inspectorships of mines, engines, etc, etc. It contents itself with preventing the inspection from degenerating into tyranny.\*

Childhood, especially, is protected. In 1832, the Commissioners could report that the children employed in the different branches of industry in the kingdom worked as many hours a day as the adults; children and adults at that time worked fourteen and fifteen hours, by day or by night. In fact, the child became a slave at the age of six, or even five years. The act of 1833 put an end to this

\* In 1871, there were only 12 inspectors 3,162 over coal mines, employing 360,874 workmen, adults and children, and raising 112,875,725 tons of coal in the year. The number of accidents was about 1000. The utility of inspectorships has been demonstrated by the fact that the number of accidents has not increased for several years, although the yield of the mines has doubled.

barbarous *régime* ; it forbade the employment of children under nine years. In 1847, parliament went one step farther, by fixing a maximum of ten hours' work by day for children and women. Since 1867, this act has been extended to all factories without exception. Have commerce and industry suffered from these restrictions? During the last twenty-five years the working population has become healthier and more robust, and consequently more intelligent. People have almost forgotten that Robert Peel, then a Tory still, that friends of the people, like Joseph Hume, and many of the radicals were opposed to the Ten Hours Bill.

Ceasing to protect agricultural labor, parliament began to protect industrial labor ; the inconsistency is only in appearance, for, by supplying the workman's child with cheap bread, it also gives him a chance to grow, and breathe, and become a man.

There is no law regulating the labor of adults ; but, as a matter of fact, by making use of the right of combination, they have reduced the day everywhere to ten hours ; all work in excess of this must be paid for extra. At this moment, strenuous efforts are made to reduce the day to nine hours, and also to forbid the employment of children under thirteen. Parliament protects women and children ; the men protect themselves. They have discovered a weapon outside of the law, in the exercise of the right of association.

Parliament repealed the old statutes that regulated the terms of apprenticeship in the various trades, that permitted

cities to send away workmen who had not served as apprentices within their city-limits, and that authorized local magistrates to fix the scale of wages for their term of office. Labor is freed from all these fetters ; but the workingmen's associations have come back, by a round-about way, to the abandoned principle of protection ; only, they seek to give the workman the privileges formerly possessed by the employer. They aim at regulating the terms of labor and apprenticeship. Narrow-minded and jealous, they have gone, in many cases, to terrible lengths. The committees of the workingmen's unions, tyrannical and irresponsible governments, have constantly resorted to threats, to the intimidation of refractory workmen ; in some cases, they have not even recoiled from crime.\*

The parliamentary investigation held at Sheffield, in 1867, made some terrible revelations ; it brought to light a hitherto unknown world, ruled by terror and vengeance. Broadhead, the secretary of a petty union of one hundred and fifty members, was seen maintaining for twenty years the monopoly of his association by means of the most hateful crimes.

But liberty of association has not suffered from these revelations. It was judged, and rightly, that it would be better to have these workingmen's unions public than secret. Not only can workmen combine to get higher wages, but they can entrust their interests to standing committees, and create a fund for strikes ; they give a part of their wages, threepence, fourpence, or even a shilling a

\* Consult the *Associations Ouvrières*, by M. le Comte de Paris.



week, to the savings-box of the union. It is not terrorism alone that swells the ranks of the union. Experience shows that these associations are more numerous in any one trade, the more that trade prospers. The workman feels instinctively that alone he is nothing. His labor gives him his daily bread ; the union gives him something more, hope, the sense of forming a part of a power in society, a spirit somewhat akin to that which animates the soldier in an army. His pride is enhanced ; he no longer feels himself held down by an insuperable weight in the depths where he passes his life.

### III.

Let us render this justice to the English workman : he does not make an excessive use of his new rights. He knows how to wait. The new Samson, he has not, in a moment of wild despair, taken hold of the pillars of the temple to make it fall upon his own shoulders. He does not separate his own lot from national destiny, his own interests from those of the country. He retains, amid his sufferings, an almost touching respect for whatever represents in his eyes the fatherland. He is not a soldier ; but if he does not pay the tribute of his blood, he gives at least his long-suffering, his obedience to law, his resignation. He reminds us of those miners who explore contentedly the depths of the earth for the metals that are to sparkle in the sunshine, or those frank spectators who, seated in the worst

places in the theatre, still enjoy the splendors of the scene. He will give his life, that England may be rich and free. Every revolution is a sort of usurpation ; the Englishman detests usurpers, chance greatness, hollow idols ; more than any one else, the workman is accustomed to a certain ratio of the effort to the result accomplished ; he is a stranger to chance ; his own life is regular and monotonous, not swerving from a fixed line. There is a certain tameness even in his pleasures. Watch him on a holiday, in some public park. Pleasure, heavy with intoxication, celebrates a sort of peaceful and indolent wake of Arcadia ; the workman, solitary, recumbent, will fix his gaze upon the turf for hours. With him, repose takes the place of happiness.

The crowd can be aroused by some great passion ; but in public meetings, even those held in the open air, in squares and market-places, enthusiasm and indignation submit to rule and discipline. There is order in disorder. The chord most readily responsive to the touch is that of justice, the multitude is moved by whatever looks like oppression ; but we can not excite it much by speaking only to its envy : the soul of the people is not haunted by the recollection of recent triumphs, bloody victories gained by force and terror over law, mortal insults to all earthly grandeur. The workman has no *Marseillaise*, no chant of insulting defiance to Europe, to royalty and the church ; no symbols, no Phrygian cap, no red flag. He does not behold an enemy, a foreigner, in the nobleman or the priest. He growls at times, but he seldom threatens.

He is not far removed from nature ; never having been a soldier, he knows no weapons but his own sturdy hands. He is brutal without being cruel. His instincts are, by nature, correct ; they have not yet been sharpened, pointed, perverted by the sophisms and flatteries of the demagogue, by a literature of lies. Those who set themselves up as his apostles and guides have been drawn to him, so far, by the spirit of charity, rather than by ambition. The sufferings of the unfortunate, the poor and the lowly, are to them a subject of remorse and not the text from which to preach insurrection. They seek to serve the people, rather than to make it their servant.

If we endeavor to sum up the principles of legislation upon social questions in England of to-day, we shall find that the State has broken, to a certain extent, with the theories that would derive all progress from the principle of utility and clearly perceived interest. Parliament has not had as much faith as political economists in the foresight of manufacturing lords and capitalists ; it has not seen fit to wait until the protection of women and children, the health of workmen, a sound system of hygiene should develop themselves, like a ripe fruit, from the foresight and intelligence of the producer. It has acted like those professed enemies of begging who can not keep their purse-strings drawn at the sight of a face bathed in tears.

Nobody will deny, at the present day, the duty of the State to afford active and unceasing protection to children, to dispute the possession of them with ignorance, vice and rude, grasping industry. Forests are put under supervis-

ion ; why not supervise mankind, and see that the budding forces and intellects are not cut down by the root ? The civilized State should seek to give the child something more than what is merely necessary to the muscular fibre, something more than air, water and bread ; it should educate him, if the father is unable to do it ; should give him the first and most precious instrument of labor, the means of instructing himself. This grand problem of popular education, so long overlooked and slighted by parliament, has never been overlooked by the church. More than half the children who know how to read are indebted for this benefaction to the old national church ; the dissenters also have their schools. The State has not yet turned into a pedagogue ; it visits the school as an inspector, purse in hand, ready to give subsidies to those who have the best methods and make the most exertions.

As to adults, the State judges that it has done enough in leaving to them, without restrictions, the formidable right of combination. It interferes in the domain of industry only to protect human life against imprudence or carelessness ; it does not protect labor nor regulate its relations to capital. The working classes have obtained from the State all that it has to give : free trade, enabling them to purchase food at the cheapest rates ; liberty of association, enabling them to regulate their wages according to the profits of capital. Association and science must do the rest. Machinery, long regarded as an enemy by the ignorant workman, is a mute ally. At Nottingham, the machines for making lace are run by workmen who earn

from fifty to sixty shillings a week ; notwithstanding these high wages, Nottingham is driving the poor *dentellières* of Flanders out of the market. Every mechanical improvement brings with it an increase in wages ; for a more complicated machine has need of a more intelligent operative. In cotton-spinning, the machine that once employed two men at eighteen shillings each a week has been replaced by another employing only one, who earns twenty-five or thirty shillings. At the beginning of the century, the ordinary workman in the cotton-mills earned four shillings and a half a week ; at the present day, when working on full time, he earns at least ten and a half, and can easily work up as high as nineteen shillings ; a woman earns ten shillings, a boy seven, a girl five.

In those districts where the operative is not nomadic, living is made easier by coöperation. A spinner can now get good and sufficient food for five or six shillings a week : add two shillings for rent and two for washing and clothes, and you will have a total of ten or twelve shillings for things necessary ; this would leave, for a good workman, ten, twelve, or fifteen shillings a week for the savings-bank. We must not disdain these petty details, these humble figures. The rate of wages and the uses to which they are put are the very life of the workman, and also the grandeur or the ruin of a civilized state. The spirit of organization, that first spent itself in the production of wealth, must now exert its inventiveness to ameliorate the condition of the producer. The workingman's town must be built, lighted, cleaned, and drained like a factory.

Life becomes, of necessity, almost conventional. The kitchen converts itself into a laboratory, the family budget becomes a part of one great budget. Is the family to disappear altogether in this great community of labor? On the contrary, a little comfort, decency of dress and habitation, modest savings accumulating in good keeping will only cement the family together more firmly. A pale ray of humble happiness suffices for an imaginative race ; "the mind is its own place," said Milton. The passions that make the family are so profound and so controlling only because they veil the world from us for a moment, hide from us the poverty of our lot.

The most terrible enemy of the English workman is drunkenness. It is difficult to preach temperance to men whose life is so hard that they are constantly tempted to drown remembrance. The Englishman does not need complete intoxication, he does not have the drinks that will procure it, whether in its gay, its maudlin, or its terrible manifestations ; his beer is both nourishment and stimulant ; it puts him into a strange sort of stupor, seldom depriving him of all his reasoning faculties ; it wraps his brain in a fog, through which flit dreams and visions.

Since 1869, the average annual consumption of stimulants, alcoholic drinks, tea, and coffee in England has been one hundred and twelve millions sterling, in which sum alcoholic drinks have by far the largest share. England has consumed four hundred and fifty millions sterling in drinks in four years, and spent only fifty-one millions in the purchase of cotton. If we reckon the yearly wages of



a workman at eighty-five pounds (thirty-three shillings a week), the items of expenditure will be as follow: forty pounds for food, seven for rent, twenty for fuel, clothing, and recreation, eighteen for tobacco and drinks.

The taxes upon stimulants yield thirty-nine millions sterling annually; almost half the budget. The workman pays in this shape, without knowing it, a much higher revenue tax than the capitalist.

We feel that there is something artificial in this new industrial world born of modern times. Is there not something strange and almost monstrous in the new ambitions that science has let loose? In England are woven the goods worn by millions of men in China and Japan; the country has turned itself into the workshop of the universe; it has the itch, the rage of work. It can not conquer the world, but it seeks to make the world tributary; it suggests to the most remote peoples wants and appetites that they knew not of. It teaches the dreamy Hindoo the value of time; its thoughts traverse the globe in all directions in "forty minutes."

It takes upon itself a thousand useless tasks. Is this insatiable labor only a new phase of the fated and perpetual struggle of nations? Or is some new ideal of society to emerge one day from this mass of effort, trouble, and enterprise? The man of to-day makes matter his slave, yet is himself too much a slave to matter. Perhaps he will succeed, some day, in making a more equitable partition of labor and happiness, duty and liberty.

## IV.

The peasant, the field-laborer, in England is only a workman. He is not an owner ; he has neither field nor house ; he hires his labor to the farmer, the tenant. Villenage died away in England by the end of the sixteenth century ; the lord lived upon his demesne land, surrounded by free tenants and by villeins, inscribed on the roll of the court of the manor ; who became, in the course of time, themselves owners, subject only to the customs of the court. Below the tenants or owners, were peasants, living on lands and in houses that did not belong to them. We may doubt whether the peasant of the present day differs much from the peasant of former ages. He is robust, solid, square-built ; he is slow in his movements, his eyes are vague, dreamy, and mild as those of oxen ; his feet seem planted in the ground. The mist and the wind beat upon him, he grows up in the furrow like a tree. We do not detect any traces of thought, anxiety, or perturbation in his expressionless countenance. The farmer on a large scale is a manufacturer, who looks upon the land as a laboratory and the peasant as a machine, less efficient and more expensive than a machine of wood and iron ; he calls him a *hand*, pays little attention to his brains or his heart. The life of the peasant begins in the fields, among the hedges and cattle ; it moves on as regular and monotonous as the course of the seasons ; usually, it ends in the

poor-house. Beneath the mild and moist sky of England, living in the open air, wearing woollen garments, the peasant contracts few diseases ; but the rain makes him subject to rheumatism, from which he suffers cruelly in old age. His limbs soon stiffen and contract.

The wages for field-labor vary according to the different counties ; in the north, in Lancashire and Yorkshire, the high wages paid in manufacturing have raised those for agricultural labor. The peasant of these counties, born on an historical battle-ground, is energetic, intelligent, sharp-witted, independent ; he would not submit to such a lot as that of the loutish inhabitant of Devonshire. In Yorkshire, the wages are thirteen shillings a week, and during the harvest they rise to fifteen and twenty shillings, and even higher. The farmer lets to the laborer a cottage and a small plot of ground for four pounds a year. In many counties, the wages are twelve shillings a week ; but these figures do not give the exact condition of the peasant ; to arrive at his income, we must add to forty-five weeks at twelve shillings, four weeks of harvesting at twenty shillings, three weeks of haymaking at the same price, and beer given either as beer or in the shape of money. The wife can also work for a few weeks on the farm, and eight to twelve weeks in the field ; the boy can work for forty-five weeks at two shillings and a half, for four weeks of harvesting at five shillings, three weeks of haymaking at three shillings. A ploughman or a cowherd can earn two shillings more a week. To complete the list, we must take into account the so-called privileges of the parish :

a bit of ground (allotment) is assigned to the peasant ; half the yield from it goes to paying the rent, the other half belongs to him, either to use or to sell. The right of gleaning also helps to swell his income, which aggregates about fifty-six pounds, or fourteen hundred francs.\*

There is one great obstacle to an increase of wages for field labor ; namely, the poor-laws and the system of charity that has been practiced in the rural districts for centuries. The peasants are accustomed to being paupers ; when their wages become insufficient, when their family becomes too numerous, they fall back on the charity of the parish and the union ; the lower the rate of wages, the higher the poor-rates, and vice versa. The land-owners, actuated by selfish instincts, prefer to eke out wages by supplemental relief, rather than pay a higher price for labor. The field-laborer is not free, strictly speaking, to offer his labor wherever he will ; he is kept back by a secret force, he is always in dread of poverty and knows that the distribution of charity is in the hands of the land-owner. The industrial workman, thanks to combination, has succeeded in treating with the manufacturer on a footing of equality ; he discusses the terms of his labor, which is regular and defined. But what can the peasants do ? They recently made an attempt in some of the counties for the first time, to form a combination. But they are too isolated, too far one from the other. Are they going to assemble, like the

\* A family composed of man and wife and six children spend about fifteen shillings a week in bread, cheese, butter, washing, tea, sugar, and schooling ; not counting clothes, drinking, and incidental expenses.

Huguenots of old, in the desert, and listen to speeches at the road-crossings, by the light of the moon? These lowly and scattered lives are bound down too much to the soil; the passions that sway great crowds cannot spring up in the silence of the fields. And what shall the peasants demand? How shall they draw up their claims? How can they speak of hours of labor? Their labor is as uncertain as the seasons; it stops, it increases, it varies incessantly. After days of hurry and trouble and interruption come days of indolence that bring with them no fatigue. Hence the salaries vary from time to time in the year. It is more difficult, then, for field-laborers than for ordinary workmen to form coalitions and make clear and precise treaties of peace with capital.

It is in the nature of things that the peasant who is not the owner of the field that he cultivates should become a sort of servant, almost a serf. His real master is not the owner of the soil, but the tenant. Does he occupy a better place than he did in the patriarchal organization of the olden time? The tenant-farmer is an impatient, grasping, restless master, often a stranger and a nomad. The peasant no longer knows the owner, sees him only from afar; he is under the rule of a man whose only attachment to the soil is that of interest. He is the serf of an estate rather than of a family. Poverty binds him as closely as did ever hereditary affection for a family or naïve feudal admiration. His home is confined, cheerless, gloomy in winter, often too far from the fields where he works. It is not astonishing, then, that population should desert the

country for the city ; every centre of manufactures or mining acts upon the population like a suction-pump. In Yorkshire and Lancashire there is often a scarcity of field-hands. In the southern counties, where there is less industry, the peasants are worst off. Wages rise only when there is a competition between industry and agriculture. The farmer himself is forced to become industrial, steam takes the place of the old ploughs, the sowers, the sickle. The English landscape is beginning to change in certain counties ; the fields are immense ; the hedges that once formed a flowery net-work over the plain must disappear, and with the hedges fall the elms. The charming disorder of the enclosures and the long green walls, forming a tableau at every step, is threatened with monotony. We scarcely see any more houses or men ; we seem to be wandering in a cultivated desert ; the land is a garden without a gardener.

Emigration, also, is threatening English soil. It is surprising that it should be so slow at the present day in the country districts ; the English peasant, possessing nothing, might easily become a nomad ; ignorance alone keeps him from it. In Germany, the emigration movement increases only when stimulated by outside urgings, by help and advances of money from friends and relatives who have already prospered in other countries. The German, threatened with military service, sober and economical, embarks at Hamburg for Pennsylvania, Illinois, Missouri, or Brazil, wherever he may be called, wherever he can find a sort of little fatherland. Nothing of the kind,



apparently, goes on in the families of the English peasantry. The soil holds them ; it possesses them, if they do not possess it. They are too poor to emigrate readily, and even too ignorant to have any knowledge of all those far-off Englands that attract only the most intelligent workmen, the most hardy farmers. Their wants, their desires, their ambitions are not great enough. We may ask ourselves what would become of England were the fever of emigration to infect the country districts. Has not nature made it for meadows rather than for fields? It is moist from incessant rains ; its long-backed cattle, its horses delight in roaming over the herbage. It is no country for the vine or for crops that demand long summers. A land of shepherds rather than of ploughmen, it can furnish meat, but it has to buy grain. It has need of peace, a long peace favoring free trade. The Emerald Isle, bathed in the vapors of the ocean, can become prosperous only by diminishing its population still more. Cold Scotland has land upon land that no amount of patience can ever render fertile. We can force nature ; but in the long run she always resumes her rights.

England is not by nature a country for small estates. Side by side with broad pasture-grounds, it must have vast fields made fertile by intense cultivation. The peasant will never become the typical inhabitant of Great Britain, as he is of Gaul ; he does not make his mark upon legislation or national history. The predominant spirit is still that of the great cities and ports. The diffusion of education in the rural districts will doubtless have the effect of

disgusting with his lot the peasant who is now resigned to it. The muscular Saxon, slow and patient, will become more like the choleric workman ; he will shake off the condition which he now accepts as we accept the wind and the rain. He will demand higher pay from the wealthy owners of the soil. But we can scarcely suppose that he himself will ever become a land-owner. Laws of inheritance and succession may be changed, and taxes, but it is impossible to see how English capital, ever growing, inflated by the conquests of industry and the tribute of the whole world, can be prevented from seizing upon English soil as its most precious prey, the most coveted adornment of wealth. The city workmen, who have now become a formidable power in the State, may, in some moment of revolutionary ardor, lay violent hands upon the English aristocracy, upon the constitution, upon capital ; but they have no interest in confiscating the soil. They live remote from it, their thoughts are elsewhere. They have city passions, they keep close together, they are strangers to the pleasures of isolated possessions and solitary life ; what they need is life in common, noise.

There is some occult relation, doubtless, between land and the limits of property, which relation may be impeded by laws but which will reveal itself sooner or later. Even in France, where the laws are so favorable to small holdings, we see large estates springing up, consolidating themselves wherever they are better adapted to improved cultivation. Agriculture can not escape the laws of trade ; it is not free from the operation of the rules that govern

capital; or the production and circulation of wealth. There can be no small holdings in forests, or large ones in vineyards. Legislation can not materially change certain natural harmonies.

There are no more political problems, so to speak, to be solved in England. Parliamentary government has been so long established that it works like a well oiled machine, without noise. Social problems are now the most important. The English mind, at once so innovating and so conservative, neither denies their existence nor despises them. It takes them up without preconceived opinion. Nobody fails to recognize the rights of labor, or denies to workmen the power of trying to raise their wages.

What more natural than that those living by wages should combine! The Middle Ages had their guilds; why should not the workmen have their unions? Have these associations become so powerful as to fix the rate of wages? No, the rate is fixed by competition among those who employ capital. All that the union can do is to accelerate a little the rise in wages, when that rise is in the nature of things, and delay the fall somewhat, when the fall is necessary. This slight advantage is counterbalanced by the expenses of the union and by the cost of strikes. The workman pays a sort of permanent tax, in exchange for which he obtains sooner than he would otherwise an increase of wages that was inevitable in the general condition of trade, or else he staves off for a while a decrease that was equally inevitable.

Many workmen hope that the unions will have the effect of creating uniformity of wages. This is a mistake. In the building business there were 90,000 union members in 1870, and yet the wages of masons varied from  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to  $7\frac{3}{8}$  pence per hour, bricklayers from  $4\frac{1}{2}$  to 8 pence, carpenters from  $4\frac{5}{8}$  to  $8\frac{1}{2}$  pence. The workingmen's-union, in fact, operates only as the governor on a steam-engine, preventing too sudden changes in the rate of speed.

English industry with its wide-reaching ambition does not live by small profits, it does not seek to obtain its returns from the insufficient recompense of the operative. Capital aims at the consumer, it rather sides with the workman ; in crises it is ready to make great sacrifices ; it will submit without murmur to bad years, in hopes of good years to come. Strikes in agriculture will doubtless never become very formidable, and even strikes in manufacturing have not yet assumed a revolutionary character. They are only a rude and clumsy mechanical device, that accomplishes at the price of great suffering what enlightened industry must aim at bringing about spontaneously.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *The Colonial Policy.*

EVERY great race feels the need of dominating ; it finds in its domination the evidence of its greatness and excellence. Outside of England proper, shut in by the seas, so small that men quarrel for the smallest parcel, there is another England, scattered all over the world ; if ever the island should become a sort of forgotten land, if ever its aristocracy and monarchy, turned bourgeois, should seek only repose, if ever the country so long dreaded should seem to crave the mercy of Europe and ask only for the privilege of applauding the triumphs of those more powerful, even then the entire globe would rise up and bear witness to the ambition of Great Britain.

I have said that a natural selection has been effected in this island so long free from invasion ; but this selection has not been effected under the ordinary conditions. The race has never been kept a prisoner ; it has always turned out of doors a portion of its offspring ; it has never received, it has always given ; the greater its purity, its singleness, its originality, the greater its fecundity. We may ask ourselves whether incessant emigration tends to ameliorate or deteriorate a race ; it takes from it whatever

is most wretched and corrupt, and also at times whatever is most energetic, most vivacious. Be that as it may, England, threatened by Europe, compelled to keep the mastery of the sea under penalty of destruction, became at once the most expansive and the most insular power. Like Greece, Carthage, Venice, all great maritime powers, it has never defended itself better than by defending itself at a distance. An island is a citadel surrounded by a ditch ; it must be protected by detached works. The Atlantic ocean is only a ditch a little wider than the Straits of Dover or St. George's Channel. As a great military power is doomed to conquests, so a maritime power is doomed to colonization. If it finds uninhabited countries, it will establish new societies, which, free and untrammelled, will develop with surprising rapidity ; if it encounters inferior races, it will destroy or subjugate them, its civilization will take root among civilizations in decay. The *jus gentium* is an application of the maxims of justice that passes current only among nations having a common stock of ideas ; Europeans establish themselves in distant countries, despite the *jus gentium* that they themselves have invented, and the moment the native commits the least infraction of a code of which he is ignorant, he is punished with the utmost severity.

The history of colonies is seldom written and never read. Our haughty Pharisaical societies, proud of their pretended morality, fed upon pretty maxims and lying phrases, willingly throw a veil of oblivion over those obscure struggles in which civilized man becomes once



more a robber, a pirate, a beast of prey. Contests between Christian peoples are regulated by certain conventionalisms, and are waged in the name of exalted interests. Might takes pains to hide behind the mask of right, it would have men believe that it is the protector of the weak and oppressed, the corrector of time-honored abuses, the sovereign sword of justice. Even as an oppressor, it seeks to convince ; it would fain compel the souls of men as well as their bodies.

In the presence of so-called inferior races, these scruples vanish ; might seems to have no longer need of justification. The vanquished millions submit to it as to a divine scourge, something incomprehensible and necessary. Certain races begin to decline the moment they find that they can no longer conquer ; they abdicate, surrender, only too happy if they can disarm the anger of some master and gain his favor.

Yet there are few nations whose power has not been troubled by the agitations of some conquered race, clinging like a thorn in their side, too strong to be destroyed, too hostile to be converted. Ireland has been the running sore of England ; it has been at once a dependency and a colony, it has never become the mate of the mother country. The Celtic spirit has found here its refuge, and maintained itself in all its purity, malignant, wild, superstitions.

Ireland is to England what England is to Europe, an island. It is almost another world, so difficult a barrier to cross is the sea. Mountains are nothing by the side of

the abysses hollowed out by the ocean and inhabited by the tempest. An eternal voice, now shrieking, now sighing, forever says to the stranger : Be gone !

Where has there ever been a conquest more cruel and more insolent ? Unlike other conquests, its effects still continue. The war between the Saxon and the Celt has never ended. A thousand circumstances have conspired to make the hatred between the two races unparalleled in its tenacity. The conquerors have not been forced to mingle with the conquered ; they have not burned their vessels on landing. - The umbilical cord connecting the conquerors with the mother country has never been severed ; the sons of the conquerors and the sons of the conquered were, only a century ago, just as far from one another as Normans and Saxons were, six hundred years ago, in England.

Since the times of Henry II., the history of Ireland is only one long martyrdom. The Celts rejected the Reformation as soon as it assumed a purely Anglican shape. Henry VIII. confiscated, at a single blow, the estates of all absentees and gave them to residents. He tried Kildare as governor, but finding him too Irish, sent him to the Tower ; Kildare's son, Lord Thomas Fitzgerald, revolted, and with his own hands beat out the brains of the venerable archbishop of Dublin, who was attempting to escape. Fitzgerald was executed. The king vainly distributed the estates of the convents and abbeys among the Irish chieftains. He caused himself to be recognized as king of Ireland and ceased to be a sort of papal viceroy.

But the people, wounded in its inmost soul, clung to its altars, its ancient worship and rites. It began to look around for foreign allies ; it became the subject of Rome. It has always confounded two causes, Irish independence and the Catholic religion. Elizabeth extended to Ireland the new religious laws made for England, but they remained a dead letter. She had neither an army with which to subjugate the country completely nor a clergy that could convert it. It is a subject of astonishment that a nation should not have thrown into the sea a petty English garrison of fifteen hundred men at the most. But the Irish chieftains were perpetually making war on one another ; Elizabeth had only to foment their discords and keep alive the bloody anarchy. James profited by an insurrection to make a sweeping confiscation ; he sent into the northern counties ten thousand farmers and workmen, with their wives and children. Ever since then there have been two populations in the island : the Catholic clans, semi-barbarians, and the Calvinists of Ulster, fanatic but industrious. Strafford attempted for a moment to pacify Ireland ; he convened an Irish parliament at Dublin in 1639 ; the Catholics were masters of the Upper House ; the Commons were Protestant and Catholic in about equal shares. This parliament voted money for raising a royal army of 9,000 men. But Strafford was recalled before he could organize it.

In 1641, the population of Ireland was composed, according to Sir William Petty, as follows : in a total of 1,500,000 inhabitants there were 1,200,000 Catholics and

300,000 Protestants, of whom 200,000 were Ulster Non-Conformists and 100,000 Anglicans, Cavaliers, Tories, the king's party. The Catholics were not all Anti-English, for the Anglo-Norman barons established in the island had not united with the Irish chieftains, Celts by race. The insurrection broke out November fifteenth, 1641 ; it was a prolonged St. Bartholomew. The massacre was frightful ; the Irish boasted of having slaughtered 150,000 heretics (probably the number did not exceed 40,000). The rebels soon fell out among themselves, and the civil war lasted nine years ; in 1650, the population of the island had been reduced by a third, to 900,000. Ormond succeeded in overcoming all resistance and collecting a fine army ; it seemed as if Ireland would at last have no master but itself. But Cromwell landed in 1649, with 14,000 men ; he reinforced his army with the Dublin garrison, 4,000 strong, took Drogheda by storm, put 3,000 men to the edge of the sword ; Wexford was taken in the same way ; at the end of a year, Ormond's army had disappeared and the quiet of the grave reigned in Ireland. Cromwell restored Ulster to the English colonists, confiscated all the estates of the rebels, and left them only one province out of four, Connaught, where they were shut in and isolated ; he gave lands to all his soldiers, and called in Flemings and Huguenots. He abolished the Irish parliament and incorporated his conquest with England. He organized the subjection and meditated the destruction of an entire race.

The generosity of the restored Stuarts gave the Irish

strength to struggle against their conquerors, but not enough to shake them off. Connaught ceased to be a prison ; many estates were restored to the former owners. The Episcopal Church was reëstablished, and also the Catholic. The Puritans, in their turn, were confined to one province, Ulster. Hence Ireland, as we know, was the last stronghold of James II. ; but it fell with him at the battle of the Boyne. William, more generous than Cromwell, suffered the Catholic religion to exist, and contented himself with distributing a few lands to his favorites. He promised that the Catholics should enjoy all the privileges in the exercise of their worship that they had had under Charles II. But they were declared ineligible for political officers, for the army, or for the corporations. The law continued to be vindictive and malicious. Even the commerce and industry of Ireland were persecuted. In 1683, the importation of Irish cattle into England was prohibited. In 1698, the exporting of Irish linen was forbidden, under penalty of death. Undressed linen could be sent only to England. In 1704, Ireland, in order to place itself on an equal footing of commerce, asked to be united with England, and the request was refused.

Archbishop Boulter, who was the real governor of the island from 1724 to 1742, wrote to Newcastle : " I beg that your grace will use your influence, that henceforth none but English are put into high positions." There were some Anglican priests who held as many as sixteen livings. The bishoprics were given to corrupt men. Swift said jestingly that the English ministry always took

care to select irreproachable men for the Irish sees, but that these saintly priests, by some strange fatality, were always assassinated on Hounslow Heath by robbers who took their papers and canonicals and crossed over to Ireland in their place.

Famines have already become periodical. What can become of a country delivered over to an aristocracy that swallows up everything and gives nothing, to a lazy herd of agents, bailiffs, sub-bailiffs of every grade, squeezing the tenant to the very last drop.

During the eighteenth century, Ireland had a parliament. But what a parliament ! Its laws are sent to it all cut and dried ; the peers are always off, spending in England the money that their agents have extorted from the humble tenants ; the Upper House is composed almost entirely of the bishops of a religion detested alike by Catholics and Presbyterians ; the Commons are the tools of an oligarchy of conquerors. An electoral reform might perhaps have been the remedy for so many evils, but the patriots wished complete independence. Ireland, half dead, did not take the first step for the Pretender, either in 1715 or in 1745, but the revolt of the American colonies and the French Revolution prepared the way for a new rebellion. The Presbyterians and the Catholics rose together ; but the revolt quickly assumed the character of a Catholic insurrection, the northern Protestants laid down their arms, and fifty thousand victims were once more sacrificed to the chimera of independence.

It was the last great effort ; then as ever Ireland had



tried to shake off her chains, then as ever her own children had been divided, treason had crept into their ranks ; there is no history more deplorable in its sanguinary monotony than the history of this martyr nation, that can neither love nor expel its conqueror. The only justification of force is peace, and England has never succeeded in bringing peace to Ireland. She has been content with dealing a few terrible blows from age to age, appearing for a moment, terrible and cruel, and then disappearing. Elizabeth, Cromwell, and William have done either too much or too little. They have introduced Protestantism into Ireland, without subjecting everything to it. English historians seek to excuse themselves by saying that free, parliamentary England, jealous of her kings, would not give them large standing armies, and that such a large army is the only thing that could have reduced Ireland, and strangled hydra-headed remembrance, hate, and tradition. The unfortunate island has always had either too many Catholics or too many Protestants. United for a moment against the English, they always fall out when they think that victory is at hand. Could an electoral reform have been effected in Ireland before it was in England? Could the Irish parliament, not representing the people, do anything for that people? Was England to practice tolerance toward a nation that was ever in rebellion, before she emancipated her own Catholics? She was condemned to keep and at the same time to aggravate her conquest, to be alternately generous and furious. England would gladly have said to the Irish : Either make yourselves free or

remain subject. She denounced the divisions, the perfidies, the acts of cowardice by which she herself profited but she did not dare to ask herself whether this corruption, this ineradicable contempt for law and order, this folly baffling wisdom were not her own work. She continually felt that she was surrounded by invisible enemies, almost invincible powers of imagination. Ireland not only solicited allies from all the enemies of England, from Spain, France, Rome, the United States, but she had silent allies in the remembrance of victims and martyrs, in fields soaked with blood, and even in heaven. She long remained what Gaul was when conquered by Rome and by the barbarians; the priests were her real leaders. It is not so very long since the peasant would say to the traveller: Here we leave Father M.'s country, or, Here we come to Father N.'s. The pope is the distant sovereign; the Catholic faith is nourished by the most sacred sentiments of the human heart, by hatred of injustice, by devotion to one's forefathers; the Irishman loves with equal fervor his celestial country and his terrestrial. What heart can remain unmoved at the sight of those long and fruitless struggles of a poetic, ardent, inconsolable race?

The revolt of 1798, as usual, was extinguished in blood. Cornwallis, who suppressed it, was terrified at the ferocity of the conquerors; Castlereagh, himself an Irishman, tried to reconcile the two countries, and purchased from the Irish parliament its own abdication for the sum of £1,260,000. According to his idea, this openly conducted bargain was to be followed by the emancipation of

the Catholics. Pitt also had embraced this idea, but sacrificed it to the religious scruples of George III. ; the act of reparation was not performed until much later. In reality, Ireland had not lost much in losing its parliament, but it did seem as if the measure of iniquity were full to running over, when it got nothing in exchange for the sacrifice. A House of Irish land owners would not have made such good laws, perhaps, as the Irish Poor-Law, the Real Estate Act, the Act on Irish corporations, the Act on the English Church in Ireland, the Education Act, passed in our times at Westminster. But these laws came only after the horrible famine and exodus, as a sort of expiation and act of repentance. The Irish members constitute in the imperial parliament a small army, that can show its strength only as it throws itself on one side or the other ; still, Ireland has scarcely a right to complain of its representation. The English Constitution does not admit of political power proceeding from mere numbers ; yet we can see that the population of Ireland, forty years ago, was one third of that of the United Kingdom, and to-day is only one sixth, while the number of deputies remains the same. The evils of Ireland are scarcely such as can be cured by more equitable and humane legislation. The heart is still in revolt, after the reason has been half satisfied. Ireland detests the physician even more than it does the disease, and would like to reject every remedy. Cherishing proudly the remembrance of its long humiliation, it knows itself to be still despised ; it detects the secret contempt lurking behind the wisdom of statesmen

who labor for its good. What would be the true remedy for its woes? A little affection; but it is a melancholy law of history that two races, two peoples can never love each other. England, now so powerful, constrained, as we must admit, to preserve Ireland within the orbit of her power, would like to be just, and even generous; but it is the chastisement of long persecutions that they seem to continue long after they have ceased. Moreover, will it ever be possible to accord to Ireland all that it claims? To give any but incomplete satisfaction? If the Catholic majority had complete power, it would confiscate all the estates of the Anglican church to its own use; it would give the full property in land to those who are only tenants, it would hand over education to the Catholic clergy. In what respect does the condition of Scotland differ from that of Ireland? Each has its representative peers, its deputies. Yet the one country is content, the other is in a constant state of irritation. It is because the one is Catholic, the other Protestant.

The agrarian question is a grave one, but it is not incapable of solution; the Irishman is not so bent upon acquiring full ownership of the soil as might be supposed. His dream is assured occupation and a low rent. The idea of property is not a Celtic idea. The Britains had no personal, individual property; the land belonged to the clan; the chieftain only took the largest share, like Achilles at the Homeric banquet. On the one hand, the Irishman does not quite understand the rather artificial system of hiring land for a term of years and paying a

fixed rent settled by previous agreement; on the other hand, his ambition does not rise to the height of ownership pure and simple; his hope hovers somewhere between the two. He is attached to the soil and would like a "good master," generous, lavish, patriarchal, *and—above all—Irish.*

The family spirit, so strong among the Celts, acts as a clog upon the peasant. The small farmer marries young in life, the priests encouraging marriage as a means of preserving morality. He has numerous children. There is soon a whole family living on a small farm broken up in fields of three or four acres. The owner either becomes a sort of patriarch or patron of a family ever growing in numbers and misery, or he is forced to protect himself by cruel ejectments.

In the Protestant province of Ulster there is a special law. The owner is bound to accept as his farmer (tenant) any one who has purchased the "rights" of the out-going farmer. In this part of Ireland, the land is not broken up into wretched parcels, but subdivided into small farms of fifteen or thirty acres. There is flax-spinning and linen-weaving, and manufactures have always flourished, even at a time when the jealousy of England had succeeded in suppressing industry in the rest of the country.

Time will heal the wounds of Ireland. The Anglican church has just been despoiled of its privileges; legislation has facilitated the sale of property encumbered with mortgages. The chimerical plans of those who would expropriate all Ireland to sell it back to the occupants of the

soil will be rejected ; but the lot of the tenants will become less precarious. This island, kept green and moist by rain and mist, has been too much subdivided ; an island for shepherds, it had become a land of tillage ; its peasants fought for patches of earth that could not support them. The great Irish exodus has perhaps been the salvation of the country ; emigration will continue until Ireland becomes rich, prosperous, and happy, until her hereditary hates have been allayed, until at last she becomes English.

## II.

Besides the British Isles, the political unity of which is now assured against every attack, England has two sorts of possessions. Even the Greeks made a distinction between colonies that were only permanent garrisons, and such as were republics like the metropolis. So we can distinguish two eras in the history of colonial government : first, the era of monopoly and protection ; second, the era of commercial liberty. Up to the present century, England, following the example set by Spain, France and Holland, reduced the commerce of her colonies to a state of servitude ; she put forward exclusive pretensions to supplying their wants, kept their products as much as possible, prohibited all industry outside of her own borders ; she demanded the raw material, and gave in exchange the manufactured product. Even those colonies that enjoyed full political liberty had, for a long time, no commercial



liberty ; as an offset, England did not demand tribute, as Rome and the Greek cities had done. The colonies really paid tribute, in the shape of indirect taxes, but they had no direct taxes. When England tried to impose a stamp-tax on her American colonies without the consent of their legislative chambers, she drove them to revolt. How could the principle which is the very essence of parliamentary life, to wit, that the nation shall pay to the sovereign only such taxes as are voted by Commons freely elected, how could this principle lose any of its force by crossing the seas and establishing itself among communities which, unreached by the rays of royalty and aristocracy, had become veritable republics ?

England has learned at the present day that the more complete the liberty of her colonies, the firmer is their fidelity. She is satisfied with having these distant republics accept from her their governors, who play the useful part of arbiters between parties. They are like constitutional kings, they drop from the sky for a few years, having no children, no ambition, no interests.

One of the special characteristics of these colonies, that constitute so many independent States, is a natural tendency to form themselves into confederations. The American colonies have become the United States ; the Canadian colonies, without shaking off English rule, have become the Dominion ; the Australian colonies are a powerful federative empire in embryo ; the colonies of the Cape are trying to coalesce. Petty settlements, humble and obscure places of refuge at the start, become provinces ;

these provinces become States. In one sense, there is no longer any but an imaginary bond of union between these provinces and the little English monarchy ; but the forces of imagination are the most subtle and the most tenacious. The affection felt by the colonist, the resident of the Cape, of Australia or New Zealand, for the mother country is akin to the love of the exile for his native land ; the sight of the English flag awakens in all these exiles of Europe a world of sad and tender thoughts ; it is to them what the Cross is to the Christian, the Crescent to the Mussulman. One does not wish to be alone in the world, despised, forgotten ; it is not enough to be rich, to own immense herds, to be monarch of all one surveys ; the soul feels the need of national instincts, of pride of race. The German, grown rich in Illinois, loves to return omnipotent to the land whence he departed a beggar. The Australian exults on entering the venerable banks of the City, his letter of credit in his hand. Steam has brought together the ends of the earth ; we can read in the *Times* the *résumé* of parliamentary debates at Sydney, Melbourne, Victoria ; people at the Cape or in Montreal wish to know who is dining with the Queen of England. The press carries a bit of England with it to all quarters of the globe, wherever the English language is spoken. Is there any essential difference between the colonist at the antipodes and the Leicestershire peasant who has never seen the Queen nor the Lord Chancellor ? What difference does it make whether one is a hundred or three thousand leagues from the capital ?

There is a sort of ideal England, then, the continuity of which is not to be broken by wide oceans, by continents, by mountains ; like Rome, London is a pole of the moral world. Fortunately there are mystic forces struggling without cessation against low and grovelling egoism. Peoples have need of an ideal, a history ; they like to live in the past as much as in the present ; glorious memories, great names are among the earliest impressions of childhood. A country like Greece takes comfort of her diminutiveness in having a history ; her name stands for high art, a grand literature. The United States, so jealous of their independence, the masters of an immense continent, are always led back to Old England by secret affinities ; even the explosions of their hate have an element of love.

The tie that unites all these societies to the present stock, however, is not merely an ideal one. Political subordination has been attenuated as much as possible ; but there are other forms of dependence. The most imperative need of young societies is credit ; what they are most deficient in is money. England has continued to be the banker of her colonies ; she becomes their silent partner, discounts their drafts on the future, subscribes to all their loans, furnishes them with the means of building railroads and docks and developing their natural resources. Three columns of the quotations of the London Stock Exchange are filled with names known outside of England only to the geographer. Men buy and sell every day the stocks of New South Wales, New Zealand, Queensland, South

Australia, Victoria, shares of railways in Canada and Melbourne and Tasmania, mining companies in the most remote quarters. All the colonies are under the industrial and commercial patronage of England ; every earnest undertaking is encouraged ; money, which commands only a low rate of interest at home (Consols yield only three per cent.), can find more remunerative employment in the dependencies. In a new country, capital increases with astonishing rapidity, but money is always scarce ; it can not remain idle for a moment, there are too many temptations, there is always something to buy. The gold of California and Australia can not remain in California nor Australia ; it is a merchandise, to be exchanged quickly for others more necessary. Commercial relations, regulated by the laws of supply and demand, could and would, no doubt, outlive mere political relations ; but the political bond of union, that has now become so slight and flexible, is interwoven with social ties, all those ties that spring from community of language, of race, of feeling, of associations ; and who shall affirm that commerce does not profit by so many and so intimate alliances ?

Economists have figured up what the colonies cost the mother country ; they are no longer willing that England should build forts or furnish armies for the colonies ; they are free, let them defend themselves ! A protracted war would, without a doubt, put the loyalty of the colonies to a severe test. If the United States should go to war with England, Canada would necessarily become a battleground. Would Australia, that can not throw the least

weight in the scale of European ambitions, suffer her commerce, her prosperity, her future to be at the mercy of those ambitions? England has the care of souls, so to speak, for the universe. She feels that she is everywhere vulnerable ; she herself has loosened the ties that bound her to all these distant states ; she has given up her commercial privileges ; she has ceased to send transported felons to colonies that were no longer willing to receive them ; she has abandoned her right of patronage, her royalties in unoccupied lands ; her sovereignty is little more than nominal ; still it exists. Should some maritime power or some coalition of maritime powers declare war upon England, she would find it to her advantage to have her colonies counted as neutral powers, and the colonies themselves, if the contest proved to be a long one, would be desirous of obtaining the advantages of neutrality. But the belligerents will not treat the colonies otherwise than as enemies, and the more they fail to reach the heart of England, the more they will endeavor to wound her at the extremities of her empire. Dragged into a contest that they could neither foresee nor prevent, victims of some fault that they did not commit, these great confederations, peaceful, industrious, almost free, will be tempted to become free altogether. The yoke of England is no longer felt ; the moment it has to be felt anew, it will become almost intolerable. Still we must not imagine that the British empire is one of those that crumble in a day ; it would argue little knowledge of human nature to suppose that it is capable of following only its instincts and inter-

ests. The United States,—or what was then the United States,—were farther off from Europe in the last century than they are to-day. Neither the descendants of the Puritans nor the sons of the Cavaliers were pleased with England ; yet they remained true to her as against France. For seven years the colonies kept up an army of 25,000 men at their own expense. During a protracted war they cost England, in the words of Franklin, “ only pens, ink and paper.”

The American colonies aided England in the acquisition of Canada ; they sought their independence only after they felt themselves wronged by the mother country. At the present day, England scrupulously avoids giving the least umbrage to the jealous pride of her colonies. She does not force upon them any political system. In 1850, the constitutions of the Australian colonies were revised. Each one obtained a House of which one third of the members were appointed by the Crown and two thirds were elected by electors subject to property qualifications (2,500 francs in real estate or 250 francs rent). The colonial budget was charged with a fixed sum for civil administration, the judiciary, and the official church. The governor, assisted by his legislative council, had the right of amending the constitution. There being no aristocracy, no Upper House, the colonial governments naturally drifted toward democracy ; so the property qualification was speedily abolished, and the secret ballot adopted in Australia long before it was in England. England did not seek to interpose the royal veto between the wishes of the



Australians and a constitution more democratic than that of the United States. On the contrary, she permitted representative governments to be established in New Zealand and at the Cape of Good Hope. Statesmen could not feel any admiration for constitutions that practically conferred uncontrolled power upon a single legislative body chosen on the basis of universal suffrage. In democratic societies, the only way of constituting an Upper House is to unite several states into one confederation, and then to bring together in a senate like that of the United States the ambassadors of those States. For this reason, England must encourage everywhere the spirit of confederation among her colonies ; she can not keep them divided in order to reign over them ; she will show more real wisdom by permitting them to coalesce. She has already favored the Canadian Dominion, through fear of the United States ; she can not prevent the Australian colonies uniting one day to found a great continental empire.

However long deferred the day of separation may be, it will come ; England will look from afar upon the triumphs of those civilizations the first seeds of which she has sown. She will be like a mother no longer recognized by her children, or rather like those inventors who behold immense fortunes built up by the aid of some machine that they themselves have been the first to construct with painful care. Steam and electricity are transforming the world far more rapidly than was possible before. The blows of destiny seem also to have become more prompt, more decisive. The wings of history beat more quickly ; man-

kind is, as it were, out of breath. Could we sleep for a century, only for fifty years, would we recognize Europe on waking? England, living by the past, so to speak, affording to the Continent the only image of stability that it still recognizes, can not escape the universal laws of human affairs.

### III.

A superior race can not do without some military establishment. The races that are given up to perpetual peace are more speedily overtaken by decrepitude. Contempt of death is the highest evidence that man can give to himself of his own excellence. Danger is necessary to the nation as well as to the individual ; it gives them temper. No race is, by nature, braver than the English. It meets every danger half-way ; it has invented sports and pleasures that are a standing invitation to death. Its young men are manly, they court exertion, contest and peril. But neither aristocracy nor people seek the formidable test of war, the most terrible, the most solemn of all, and the only one that assures and maintains the primacy of a nation or a race. Whether we deem it well or ill, the entire history of civilization may be summed up in the dates of a few days of carnage. We must know how to give and how to take death. Man can make no greater sacrifice than that of his life. And nations grow in greatness only through the sacrifice, the immolation of the individual.

But England has discovered outside the limits of Europe new scenes for the display of her military prowess. We should scarcely be guilty of exaggeration in saying that she is always at war in some quarter of the globe. Not only has she colonies, she has dependencies, she makes conquests, she rules by the force of her arms over immense regions. We rarely fail to observe, in the great pageants held at London, amid the representatives of European dynasties and the British aristocracy, some face that recalls to us those grand remote empires where the Saxon race now holds sway. The red-haired Englishmen, dressed in black, without ornament, without side-arms, without grace of movement, must seem to be the real barbarian to these oriental dreamers, with their finely cut, delicate features, their blaze of diamonds and precious stones ; yet the stranger kings are slaves, their arms are but toys, their very splendor pays homage to the conqueror.

The vast conquests of England have been made without design, without preconceived plan ; *crescit eundo*. Commercial zeal opened a career to the instincts of rule of the race. The conquest of India began with the quarrel between some English and some French merchants. France of the eighteenth century, forgetful, terrified and disdainful, deserted its traders, while England protected and helped hers and soon saw how they might be of service to her.

At the death of Aurungzebe, who annexed the Dekkan to the territories of the Great Mogul, the empire began to

break up. Something like a feudal state was established. The terrible invasion of Nadir Shah (1738) revealed the weakness of the ancient monarchy. A kingdom was established, having Hyderabad for its capital and embracing a large part of the Dekkan; in the north and north-west was the confederation of the Mahrattas; in the south, the kingdom of Mysore. The governor of Oude had made himself independent; the Rajpoots in the north, the princes of Coimbatore, Travancore, Tanjore, Cochin, and the Carnatic were nearly so; also the Afghans, the Sikhs, of the Punjaub, the Goorkas, the Rohillas.

The English Company, which was at first nothing more than an association of traders, was forced into becoming a political power by the end of the seventeenth century. Its agents began to make acquisitions of territory and demand concessions. War broke out in 1744 between France and England. Two handfuls of men fought one another for an empire. La Bourdonnais, Dupleix and Bussy contended against Clive. French soldiers were the first to beat the armies of the Great Mogul. Dupleix exposed the hollowness of the great Asiatic powers. If France had supported him, or merely not thwarted him, he would have made himself master of the Dekkan and shut the English up in a few miserable factories. If the French of Chandernagore had not remained neutral in the quarrel between Clive and Surajah Doulah, Clive would have been lost, would never have recaptured Calcutta. But the Englishman had no sooner made peace with the cowardly Asiatic than he attacked and took Chanderna-

gore. Then the Nabob perceived his danger; but it was too late.

From these and the following events, in which the most hideous treason played the principal part and in which the *jus gentium* was trampled under foot in the most audacious manner, dates the origin of English rule in India. Clive saw that it was necessary to place creatures of England upon the thrones, to make princes the instruments of enslavement; his army spread terror everywhere and pillaged the country. Clive took for his own share between two and three hundred thousand pounds, and considered himself quite moderate. The Mogul attempted to assert his rights of sovereignty over Bengal; Clive threw aside the mask, he defended the vassal against the nominal liege-lord. The throne of Bengal was sold and re-sold; the ransoms of princes, lacs of rupees were sent to the dingy counting-houses in the City of London. England found a country ripe for every civil, political, religious contest; war became the purveyor of sordid avarice; an easy war, for there was never anything more to do than to side with one party against another; a war without a truce, for the immense empire of the Mogul was long in breaking up, and the wave of conquest mounted slowly toward the Himalaya, like a tide that has no ebb.

There is no power, so to speak, that is not tainted at its source. The rules of justice are really binding only on those who consider themselves equals. Every European race, when brought in contact with races that it looks upon as inferior, uses without pity and without remorse

every advantage conferred upon it by civilization. The English race, finding the races and religions of India involved in contentions, saw itself all the more powerful for being an alien. By a monstrous perversion of justice, it set itself up as the High Justiciary of the peninsula ; it substituted itself everywhere for the sovereign, conquering or purchasing titles of sovereignty ; in fine, it established order and peace in immense regions which, were its sway withdrawn, would certainly be given up to terrible civil wars. England represents that indefinable something called progress ; it plays in India the part that might be played in Europe by some new race that should make itself the guardian of public peace, that should extort a recognition of its supremacy from the French, the Germans, the Russians, taking their armies into its pay and allaying their inveterate hates and jealousies by its contempt or by its authority.

Such enterprises, could they be foreseen at a glance in all their magnitude, would never be attempted. Had any one told Clive or even Warren Hastings that they were laboring to reduce two hundred millions of human beings to English rule, their audacity would have become hesitating. A sort of fatality urged on the arms of England from province to province ; she could not pause in her work of conquest. Her empire being an empire of imagination as well as a conquest by force, she must startle by incessant and powerful blows the minds of peoples already subdued, of peoples still trembling and not yet resigned, finally, the minds of her neighbors. One



conquest leads to another, one intervention to another. The name of England must become an object of terror throughout the East. Europeans are at this moment making their way into the Chinese Empire and Japan ; a fatality like that which seized upon England in India has already brought them under the walls of Pekin. The time will certainly come when the great peoples that now fill Asia and the island of Japan will look upon the English or the Americans as their true masters. In Java, the Dutch rule twenty millions of islanders with an army of twenty-five hundred men, well organized, recruited among the natives but officered by Europeans.

The Sepoy rebellion came near putting an end to English rule in India ; but the energy with which it was suppressed must have made a powerful impression upon these races that are so ready to bow to the blows of fate. England became more prudent, more considerate of the religious prejudices of her native soldiers. Not that she had ever been oppressive, from the religious point of view ; she was rather ignorant than oppressive. Every conquest, however brutal it may be, seeks to justify itself in its own eyes ; but England, with all her religiousness, never tried to pass off her Asiatic enterprises as Protestant crusades. The earliest conquests in India were made at a time when religious fervor had been somewhat cooled down by philosophy. The *Company* defended only its commercial monopoly, and made no pretensions to a religious monopoly. It established no propaganda ; it was tolerant, or rather indifferent, taking under its protection all the rites

and superstitions, recognizing all the religious establishments, and administering the revenues of Hindoos, Musulmen and Parsees. The Christian successors of the absolute government of the Great Mogul suffered Christian churches to starve ; there were Nestorians at Travancore ; they became Helots, like the Catholics in England.

The first bishop of Calcutta was appointed only in 1814 ; in the presidency of Bengal there were only nineteen chaplains ; but one Scottish minister was permitted in each presidency. Native Christians were obliged to drag the cars of idols and perform impious forced labor. Military honors were paid to the images and sacred temples of the Hindoos ; the company administered the revenues of the pagodas. The burning of widows was permitted as late as 1829. Christianity did not humiliate itself, it merely withdrew from sight. Up to 1830, Christians born in India were excluded, in the presidency of Madras, from all public offices, from the bar, the bench, the army ; their personal status was not even defined. The East understands neither tolerance nor the separation of Church and State ; how should the sovereign renounce the vast wealth of the churches ? Still, when the company ceased to be free and became the mere agent of parliament, England thought to withdraw from the administration of the churches. In 1846, the India Council essayed to transfer to trustees the vast possessions that had been for generations the patrimony of sects. This act of relinquishment was not understood, it was looked upon as an abdication or the part of the sovereign. Lands were offered to the

temple of Juggernaut, which was already in receipt of a large income. The native Catholics were emancipated. These reforms caused great commotion throughout the peninsula ; the natives thought that their religion was in jeopardy, and these apprehensions were not without their share in the great revolt of 1857. How many prisoners, on the point of being executed, offered to become converted, and were seized with consternation on finding that the offer could not save them ! To semi-barbarous races there is nothing repugnant in forced conversion ; might always seems to them the best sanction of right. Hence Moham-medanism alone makes slow progress in India, for it is a militant and conquering religion ; it is not triumphant at this present moment, but it has vague dreams of fresh triumphs. It arouses a race enervated and benumbed by Buddhism and offended by Christianity. The State, holding itself more and more aloof from sects, considers itself obliged to moderate the blundering zeal of missionaries, and has entrenched itself in a sort of religious nihilism. It does not claim the right of keeping the consciences of men ; the Mohammedan faith, sustained by glorious remembrances and hopes, profits by this inertia to propagate itself. It has a vitality, an energy, that are wanting in the old religion. The Mohammedan world is not broken up into castes, and the Koran is more dangerous than the Vedas. The Bible is a dead letter by the side of these sacred books. The natives who abandon their ancient religion and accept civilization, become deists, free-thinkers.

Never has there been domination more material than that of the English race in India ; moral force, at least that which springs from religious doctrines, has had no share in it, so to speak. The Englishman does not even take the trouble to argue with the natives, he does not reveal to them his own hidden life, he does not aim at converting them, he rules them. Surrounded by hypocritical and lying races, he never lies ; but this very virtue seems to them doubtless only one of the forms of supreme contempt. The native is not much nearer to him, morally speaking, than the tiger or the leopard that he hunts in the jungle. The Scotch, Irish, or English soldier, come of a superior race, scorns to touch anything but his arms ; the kitchen and all his menial wants are attended to by Coolies. The officer has but one object : to live long enough to return to England on a pension. His health is looked after ; if he begins to suffer from the climate, he is sent to the hills for a change of air. A handful of strangers rules two hundred thousand soldiers, who rule two hundred million men. There is a sort of rude equity in the stranger, that enables him to conduct the administration for the most diverse races. Men who, in their own country, are so timid, so concerned about public opinion, who discuss incessantly the nicest shades of political justice, who can make themselves humble with the humble, who have a sort of morbid respect for individual rights, find themselves all at once omnipotent, judges, generals, law-givers, sovereigns. There is something monotonous, rigid, contracted about the English race, and yet this race finds

itself mixed up in the most diversified dramas, with the most dissimilar actors. It suffers itself to be led on by its courage and also by a sort of sovereign contempt that succeeds in taking in the place of knowledge and equity. It is just as ready to treat with the subtlest representatives of the most ancient religions as with the most savage chieftains of rude tribes. In her work of colonization, England casts aside all her parliamentary notions and constitutional prejudices ; she does not hold that the rules by which she is governed can be applied elsewhere to advantage ; but she remains true to her great economic principles, and in so doing perhaps she guarantees most effectually the permanence of her power. She has given up the old colonial idea, such as France and Spain long adhered to ; she does not look upon government as a means of extracting all the wealth possible from the colonies to squander it in the mother country. She is satisfied with having her agents remunerated generously enough to induce them to quit their country for awhile ; she demands from her distant possessions no tribute, no ransoms, no perpetual sacrifices. She administers the finances according to the wisest rules that she can discover, and does not aim at crushing the people with taxes ; she seeks out the best taxes, those which operate least as a restraint upon the production and circulation of wealth. In a word, she has invented a new colonial ideal, that consists in considering commerce and not the payment of tribute as the natural bond of union between a colony and the mother country. The more this commerce prospers, the more the mother

country will become enriched, and the prosperity of this commerce is dependent upon the prosperity of the colony.

It has been said that if England were expelled from India, she would leave no trace of her conquest except a few broken bottles. They who say so forget the network of railways that unite the different parts of the peninsula ; above all, they overlook the remembrance of the longest peace that the East has ever known, the benefits of established order among peoples long condemned to the most cruel oppression, to incessant war, to misery and hunger. The reformers who obtained the repeal of the Corn Laws and Navigation Laws, who conferred upon England the benefit of commercial liberty, have not only saved their country from sanguinary revolutions ; they have,—without knowing it and almost without wishing it,—assured for an indefinite time to come the commercial supremacy of England. People have discovered that the best way of keeping men in obedience is not to treat them as enemies. Commerce is a purer school of politics than diplomacy is ; credit is based upon the observance of agreements, and the credit of England has become her real strength.

The East, given over to usury for centuries, is becoming acquainted with better rates of interest ; all along the shores and in the islands of the New Mediterranean called the Pacific Ocean, civilized peoples are essaying their powers in conflicts of a new order ; the future is no longer to the one that shall be most formidable, most unrelenting, but to the one that shall inspire the most confidence. In this conquest of the world by credit and com-



merce, England will for a long time have immense advantages. She is at once daring and prudent, active, adventurous ; the world of Asia is large enough for her and also for the United States and for Russia, her only formidable rivals. The United States approach Asia from the sea ; Russia, from all quarters. The most direct route from England is barred by the Isthmus of Suez. This strip of land incommodes her ; it is not enough for her to have Gibraltar and Malta, she must have a foothold in Egypt. At least she can not suffer any other European power to establish its supremacy over that country, but wishes to have it as a sort of vassal.

There was a time when France might have thought of conquering Egypt ; her present condition will not permit her to entertain such vast designs. England feels reassured ; the Suez canal was constructed with French money, but, now that the work is accomplished, others will profit by it. England is overrunning Egypt with her new weapons, with her banks, her credit, her capital ; she is acquiring a controlling position. She has even invaded the mountains of Abyssinia to punish a monarch who had dared to defy her. Her travellers penetrate to the very heart of Africa and cross it in every direction.

## IV.

Three immense continents remain open to English ambition : Asia, Australia, Africa ; England is more tempted to curtail than to extend her conquests in these countries. She feels at times startled, as it were, at her own greatness, at the efforts she imposes upon herself. She makes too much of a figure in the world at large and perhaps too little of a figure in Europe, and this contrast keeps fretting her. Her activity loses heart. Has she not to know everything, be informed about everything, watch Central Asia, keep track of Russia there, learn the secrets of the seraglio, hold the threads of a hundred political combinations, suppress insurrections at the ends of the earth, hasten to the aid to every Englishman who cries : *Civis romanus sum*, learn all the languages, administer the justice of the Koran and the justice of the Gospel ? She exercises a sort of guardianship, the duties of which become day by day more overwhelming because they are day by day better understood.

Respect for human life and property is the primary object of government ; human societies can secure this benefit by force alone, whether that force be called police or called army. The State in any given country has the incontrovertible right of suppressing whatever is undertaken against the rights of individuals ; and when a country is in such a wretched state of anarchy that human life ceases, so

to speak, to have any value, we can scarcely condemn the nation that seizes upon that country and restores peace. England has had, at all events, a clear understanding of the duties imposed by the patronage that she exercises over so many inferior races ; she protects reviving civilizations and also civilizations in decay ; if her interference with so many different races and peoples be considered as injustice, it may be asserted that her greatness can not do without injustice, but lives by it, is nourished by it. The entire edifice of her power would fall to pieces, the moment she attempted to make a universal application of the principles of pure Christian morality ; she quiets her conscience with the recollection of what she has done for the liberation of the negro. She kept down the slave-trade, while praying for the success of the Southern Confederacy, of which slavery was the corner-stone. She has, as it were, two attendant genii ; the one prompting her to conquest, rapine, covetousness, contempt for everything that is not English, inflexible severity towards the weak and the conquered ; the other inspiring her with respect for justice, with a certain love for humanity that has in it far more of religiousness than of tenderness, that springs not so much from compassion as from equity.

Not by force alone, with an army of sixty thousand English troops, would England have succeeded in holding sway for more than a century over two hundred millions of natives. The Anglo Saxon race is an imperial race, born to command. It knows how to exercise every function, adapt everywhere means to ends. It does not intro-

duce into its dependencies the political and administrative habits of the mother country. The Lords who, at Westminster, restrict themselves to the narrow circle prescribed by the constitution, become, at Calcutta, governors, as it were, of India, administrative emperors, institutors of reform in every shape ; the government which, in England, keeps in the background as much as possible, doing only what is strictly necessary, and leaving all that it can to the initiative of the individual, becomes, in India, the supreme and universal motive power. We see in this great Asiatic conquest the type of a paternal government, representing not one party that has come into power, and that exercises an ephemeral and stubbornly disputed sway, but the continuous, uninterrupted force of administrative and social progress. The government of India has become the type of an administrative monarchy ; politics, at least what we generally mean by this word, that is to say, parliamentary contest, incessant opposition to the action of the State, the power of eloquence, the propaganda of human speech, have no place here. This great country is governed like a factory ; it is led on to the future by a despotism that is neither fanciful, nor personal, nor arbitrary, by an enlightened despotism that makes use of its power only to break down useless barriers, shake off the fetters that impede trade and the circulation of wealth. The colossal experiment that the European genius is now making in Asia, an experiment begun without method but now pursued according to rules that become surer and surer, has not yet borne fruit ; we can scarcely conjecture what

will be the results, what will be the transformation of these numerous races armed, as though by a god from on high, with the most perfect instruments of civilization, before they have fairly emerged from barbarism. Nothing in history is comparable to these metamorphoses, neither the conquests of Alexander, nor the more substantial conquests of Rome, nor the invasions of the Barbarians. Asia is too powerful a body to melt away at the touch of European civilization; its human myriads will not disappear like the few scattered tribes of Red-skins or Australians. But its religions will be shaken, its ideas will become modified, its races themselves will undergo change. England plays at the present day the great role of disturber of the barbarian world that was so long played by Rome; she is reversing the Barbarian invasions; she has made her way into a barbarian world, introducing her military organization, her social customs, her commercial usages, her religion, her aristocratic hierarchy, everything that goes to the making up of her power and her ideal.

The theory of paternal government, the king as defined by Bossuet and Fenelon and desired even by Voltaire, seems to the European states of to-day a chimera; utility comes more and more to be regarded as the excuse, the *raison d'être*, of government. Fidelity to a race, to a family, to a person, to any one particular form of government, to a written and venerable charter,—all these ties are becoming relaxed. People dream of a State in which there shall be no more politics, in the present meaning of the term, no more parties, no more hostile camps

inflamed with rival passions, but in which administration shall become the chief office of a government of reason, a protecting, peaceful, strong government, which, no longer occupied in its own defence, may devote itself exclusively to the solution of all the social problems. It matters not whether such a government be a monarchy or a republic. The king or the president can be only the highest wheel in a powerful administrative machine. Science, patient and mute labor, action, the spirit of innovation, statistics, hygiene will occupy, in these great administrative empires, the place now held by eloquence and parliamentary intrigue. We are not comparing, in this place, the two systems, the government of men by argument and the government of men by hierarchy ; but it is certainly curious that England should succeed in applying them both, that she should have urged them both, so to speak, to the pitch of perfection. At bottom, she is always true to herself, whether on the banks of the Ganges or on the banks of the Thames. The English race is profoundly imbued with the sense and conviction of its right of patronage. In India, the Englishman patronizes whole races and peoples ; he drives them before him like human herds, defending them from their own dissensions. In England, the governing, ruling class also exercises a right of patronage. The mandate\* of the lord, of the member of the House of

\* I have preferred to translate this passage literally, instead of blunting its point by circumlocution. The meaning turns upon the word *mandate*, which can be explained only by going back to the Roman Law. In that system, the person employing another to do a certain thing for him was called *mandator* : the agent was called *man-*



Commons, has nothing in common with the imperative mandate of demagogic societies ; it has not the restricted character of the mandate given to an attorney ; it is a mission, not merely conferred by the chance of birth or by the chance of election, but imposed by fortune, by education, by all the accumulated forces that exalt a civilization. We always see two contending parties ; but the altercations of these parties are only the expression of the doubts, the hesitations of a conscience that is trying to find its way. We do not perceive the authority, because it is always preceded by persuasion ; but behind the tangled veil of parties there is a will, an inflexible, manifold, myriad-armed authority that carries with it the entire country.

As long as England has this sturdy faith in herself, she will continue to grow in greatness, or at least she will know how to defend her greatness. She has almost nothing to fear from Europe ; she exaggerates the peril to be apprehended from Russia or the United States. Her real enemy is nearer at hand ; the entire edifice of her power is sustained by a few ideas that begin to be in jeopardy, and by—shall we add ?—certain fictions. Now modern democracy rejects all fictions, or whatever it takes to

*datarius* ; the thing itself, the legal relation thus created, and the instructions, were all three called *mandatum*. In this particular passage, the word mandate denotes instructions, and also the legal relation, or power, itself. The point that the author wishes to bring out is simply this : that the electors in England have not the right to force any binding, imperative instructions upon their representatives in parliament ; the deputy is the *mandatarius*, but his *mandatum* is unrestricted and irrevocable, and can be terminated only by death or the dissolution of parliament. TR.

be fictions: the fiction of royalty, the fiction of hereditary aristocracy ; it is no longer willing to make any concessions to the past and its reminiscences ; it puts mankind on a war-footing, it abases whatever is exalted and exalts whatever is abased. It gives to numbers an active, impatient, jealous sovereignty ; it would gladly shatter all the political forms consecrated by the experience of even the most flourishing republics, to emancipate itself from all rule, from all restraint. There is no doubt but that the democratic spirit is making great progress in England, numbers are becoming, in their turn, a political power ; but, by a freak of fortune, the passions of the masses are not yet hostile to those powers that come of time, that proceed from the past, and that now occupy the political arena. The people is like the chorus weeping or rejoicing with the heroes of the play, echoing their words, and not dreaming of taking exclusive possession of the stage. The people still believes in its gods and its demi-gods ; it is not egoistic, it suffers something to live by its side ; it has need of some object of admiration, of adoration ; it forgets itself in the sight of this grand apotheosis of everything that it is accustomed to venerate, to love and to serve. It might adopt the motto of the Prince of Wales : *Ich dien* ; it serves assuredly not a man, a family, nor certain men, certain families, but England, invisible, universal ; it has faith in this England, it admires whatever adds anything to her power ; it has made her free by dint of obedience, great by dint of humility. Hitherto the English aristocracy has succeeded in keeping alive these sen-

timents, in nourishing the popular imagination with visible and imaginary grandeur ; the word gentleman, which is no longer used in France except in a material sense, has preserved in England an ideal meaning, and here we have perhaps the secret of the astonishing permanence of English unity. How shall that unity, now so profound, be one day threatened? Will the aristocracy of money, that has begun to mingle with the aristocracy of birth and is doubtless to end by dethroning it, will this aristocracy be as able, as popular as the elder aristocracy? We may doubt it. When the real sovereign is the richest man, when the old races have become the vassals of speculators, when those who give their lives are replaced by those who buy the lives of others, the English ideal will become dimmed and finally extinct. In this overpopulated isle there will be none but hirers and hirelings ; and the religion of the new era, socialism, will find here the greatest number of martyrs, of fanatics, and of executioners. Nowhere else will the levelers find so much to destroy. The higher the edifice shall have been erected, the greater will be the crash of its downfall. There is so much artifice, or rather so much art, in England's greatness as a power, that it can be kept up only by a sort of perpetual miracle of self-denial on the part of the governed classes, and of wisdom, toil, and clear-sightedness on the part of the governing. Let the latter get but a touch of the madness that Jupiter sends to those whom he wishes to ruin, take from the former their slowness, their patience, and catastrophe upon catastrophe will ensue. The English constitution is like a

complicated machine, where we can not break a single part without stopping the whole. Everything is suspended by a few venerable opinions, twisted together like the strands of a cord; let but a strand or two break, and the whole cord may give way and everything be dashed to pieces at once.

THE END.



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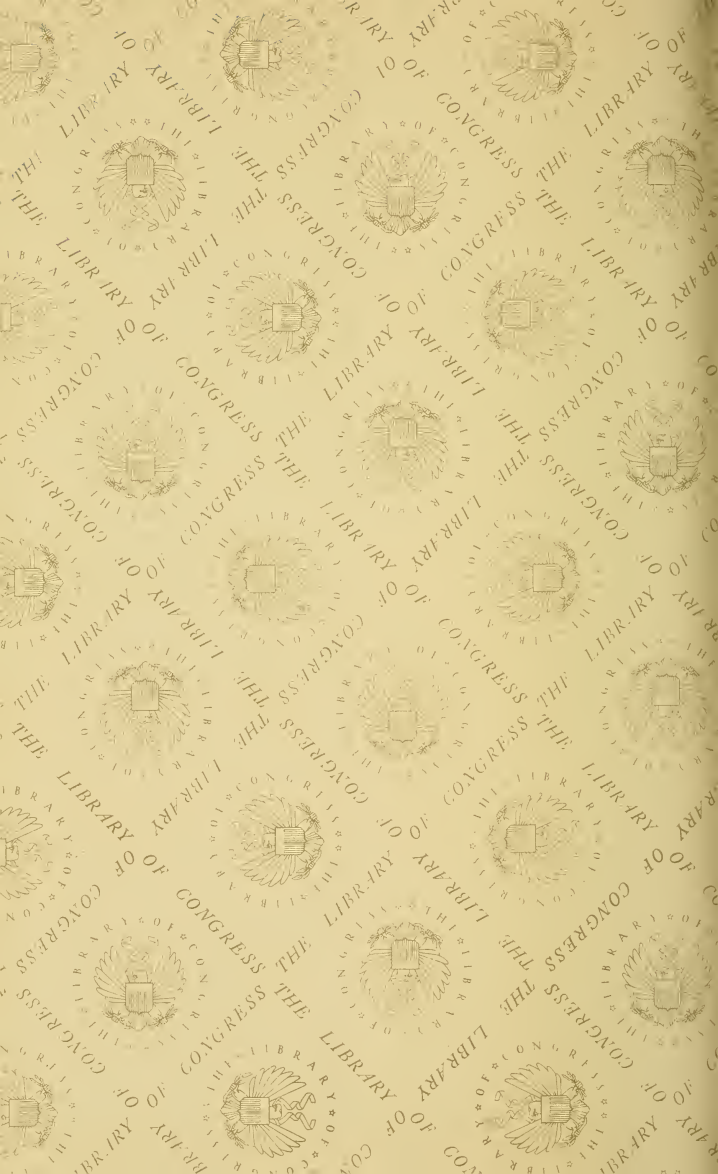
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